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Primary Causality and *ibdā'* (*creare*) in the *Liber de causis*

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The *Liber de causis* (LDC), a short metaphysical treatise translated into Latin in the Twelfth century in all likelihood by the famous Gerard of Cremona at Toledo, exercised a powerful influence in the thinking of European theologians and philosophers of the High Middle Ages and beyond, something easily evidenced in the large number of extant Latin manuscripts (over 250) and commentaries as well as the many references made to this work.¹ Its early importance to metaphysical thinking on God and creation among the Latins led to its becoming required reading for all who wished to understand the thought of Aristotle to whom the Latin tradition attributed the text until Thomas Aquinas made known its dependence on the *Elements of Theology* of Proclus.² While evidence of this work in the Arabic tradition is very modest with only three manuscripts known to be extant and no direct citations of it in what we have of the writings of the most well known philosophers of the Classical tradition – al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes –, it has recently been argued that the *Liber de causis* importantly and decisively influenced metaphysical thinking in the early formation of philosophy in the Islamic milieu from Greek sources in the era of al-Kindi.³ If this view is able to withstand critical scrutiny, the importance of the *Liber de causis* for the Arabic tradition from the Ninth century and for the Latin Tradition from the Twelfth century would earn that little work very special

¹ For a thorough account of the status quaestionis of the texts of this work in Latin and Arabic, of its sources, of secondary literature and more, see Cristina D'Ancona and Richard C. Taylor, „Le *Liber de causis*“, in: *Dictionnaire des Philosophes Antiques. Supplément*, ed. Richard Goulet et al. Paris 2003, 599-647.

² *Ibid.*, 604-5.

³ Cristina D'Ancona, „The Origins of Islamic Philosophy“, in: *The Cambridge History of Philosophy in Late Antiquity*, ed. Lloyd Gerson, Cambridge 2010, Vol. 2, 869-893, 1170-1178. In particular, see 879 where the author identifies a citation of a certain *kitāb al-'ulal* mentioned in Arabic version of Alexander of Aphrodisias, *Qu.* 2.19, as „nothing else than the pseudo-Aristotelian *Liber de causis* of the Latin Middle Ages.“ For this the author draws on the work of Silvia Fazzo and Hillary Wiesner in „Alexander of Aphrodisias in the Kindi Circle and in al-Kindi's Cosmology“, in: *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 3 (1992) 119-153, in particular 152 sqq. where the authors translate the Arabic text from MS Istanbul, Suleymaniye Kütüphanesi, *Carullah* 1279, 63v-64r. On 139 they write, „Such a reference tied to such a Proclan concept encourages the hope that this might be the earliest appearance of the *Liber de causis*, appearing anomalously by the name under which it travelled to the west. The phrase does not exactly match any in the *Liber de causis*, although the terminology and the notion are at home in it.“ The difficulty is that the LDC in Arabic is not called *kitāb al-'ulal* in its title or in any citations in the Arabic tradition. Prof. D'Ancona was generous enough to share with me her discussion of this issue in „Nota sulla traduzione latina del *Libro di Aristotele sull'esposizione del bene puro* e sul titolo *Liber de Causis*“, forthcoming in a Festschrift for Gianfranco Fioravanti.

prominence as an invaluable key to unpacking metaphysical accounts of creation by philosophers of the Arabic tradition and theologians and philosophers of the Latin tradition. Yet if that is so, then the honor must be shared to some extent with the Neoplatonist Proclus.

The *Liber de causis* consists of quotations, paraphrases, interpretations, and additions to texts extracted from the work of Proclus and also bears clear evidence of the influence of *Plotiniana Arabica* (*PA*) texts derived from the *Enneads* by the founder of Neoplatonism, Plotinus.⁴ The works of those two thinkers are more commonly considered not to promote a doctrine of creation but rather something different, a teaching of a necessary emanation of reality from the One which overflows insofar as it is also the Good. For example, in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, four characteristics of Neoplatonic emanation in contrast to creation are listed by W. Hasker, the last of which is, „The emanation of a lower level from a higher is eternal and necessary; it follows from the nature of the higher level, and does not involve or depend on a decision of will.“⁵ In contrast, creation is joined with religious teachings and described by Hasker as, „The doctrine of the creation of the universe by God is common to the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam; reflection on creation has been most extensively developed within the Christian tradition. Creation is by a single supreme God, not a group of deities, and is an ‚absolute‘ creation (creation *ex nihilo*, ‚out of nothing‘) rather than being either a ‚making‘ out of previously existing material or an ‚emanation‘ (outflow) from God’s own nature. Creation, furthermore, is a free act on God’s part; he has no ‚need‘ to create but has done so out of love and generosity. He not only created the universe ‚in the

⁴ The *PA* draws on Plotinus, *Enneads* IV-VI but does so within an interpretive framework much influenced by Aristotelian thought itself influenced by the later Neoplatonic tradition. The texts of the *PA* include (i) *The Theology of Aristotle*, ed. ‘Abdulrahman Badawi in *Plotinus apud arabes/Iflūṭīn ‘inda l-‘arab*, Cairo, 1955, and translated into English by Geoffrey Lewis in *Plotini opera* II, Paris/Bruxelles 1959, on the basis of Lewis’s unpublished edition and translation his in: *A Re-examination of the so-called ‚Theology of Aristotle‘*, D. Phil., Oxford University 1950; (ii) *The Treatise on Divine Knowledge*, ed. Paul Kraus published by Georg C. Anawati, O.P., in: „Le Neoplatonisme dans la pensée musulmane: état actuel des recherches“, in: *Acta Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei*, Roma 198 (1974), 339-405; translations available in *Plotini opera* II; Arabic text also published by Badawi in: *Plotinus apud arabes*, 165-183; (iii) *The Sayings of the Greek Wiseman*, in: Lewis, *Re-examination*, for which Oxford Bodleian Marsh MS 539 was used; translations in: *Plotini opera* II; a portion of the Arabic texts are published by Badawi in: *Plotinus apud arabes*, 395-99. For further information on the *PA*, see Peter Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus. A Philosophical Study of the Theology of Aristotle*, London 2002; and Maroun Aouad, „La Théologie d’Aristote et autres textes du Plotinus arabus“, in: *Dictionnaire des philosophes antiques*, ed. Richard Goulet, Paris 1989, Vol. I, 541-90.

⁵ William Hasker, „Creation and conservation, religious doctrine of“, in: Edward Craig (Ed.), *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, London 1998, Retrieved August 19, 2011, from <http://0-www.rep.routledge.com.libus.csd.mu.edu/article/K012SECT3>

beginning', but he sustains (,conserves') it by his power at each moment of its existence; without God's support it would instantly collapse into nothingness."⁶ Let us call this notion creation₁ or Abrahamic creation and stipulate that it involves a single primary cause or First Cause originating all reality other than itself by bringing forth all *ex nihilo* as ontologically after absolute nothingness in an action somehow including freedom, will and choice such that there is neither external nor internal necessity compelling creation₁. In this the primary cause acts with freedom and in no way whatsoever needs to originate things, nor was it required to originate them by its intrinsic nature or formal constitution.

In its Latin translation the *LDC* is clearly understood by the translator and the subsequent Latin tradition as a creationist account of some kind. In chapter 3 the First Cause is said to create the being of soul through the mediation of intelligence (*causa prima creavit esse animae mediante intelligentia*).⁷ In chapter 4, being (*esse*) is described as the first of created things (*prima rerum creatarum*) and to be after (*post causam primam*) but near to the First Cause which is described as pure being and one. Created being is identified with the intelligence in chapter 4 and as the first created thing created by the First Cause (*primum creatum quod creatum est a causa prima*) in 6/ some Latin manuscripts 7.⁸ In 15/16 first created being (*ens creatum primum*) is again intelligence and is called created and second being (*ens secundum creatum*) in relation to the First Creating Being (*ens primum creans*). In 8/9 – which is not dependent on Proclus but rather Plotinus in the *Plotiniana Arabica* – the Latin has the First Cause creating all things (*creans omnes res*) but again creating the intelligence without mediation and soul and nature through the mediation of the intelligence (*creans intelligentiam absque medio et creans animam et naturam et reliquas res, mediante intelligentia*). In 14/15 first created being as intelligence is infinite but First Creating Being is the first pure infinite (*ens autem primum creans est infinitum primum purum*) and even above infinity (*ens primum creans est supra infinitum*). In 17/18 the First Being is motionless and the cause of causes (*ens primum est quietum et est causa causarum*) giving being to all things (*dat omnibus rebus ens*) through the mode of creation (*per modum creationis*), while others such as intelligence give to things not through the mode of creation but through the mode of form (*non per modum creationis immo per modum formae*). In 19/20 the

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ For the Latin text of the *LDC* I and elsewhere in this article follow the edition of Adrian Patin, „Le *Liber de causis*. Édition établie à l'aide de 90 manuscrits avec introduction et notes“, in: *Tijdschrift voor Filosofie* 28 (1966) 90-203, as corrected in Richard C. Taylor, „Remarks on the Latin Text and the Translator of the *Kalam fi mahd al-khair/Liber de causis*“, in: *Bulletin de Philosophie Médiévale* 31 (1989), 75-102. This revised text is printed in Albertus Magnus, *De causis et processu universitatis a prima causa*, ed. Winfried Fauser, Cologne 1995 [*Opera omnia* 17, 2].

⁸ In some Latin manuscripts the text of 4 is split into 4/5 with the result that the Latin manuscripts of the *LDC* have totals of 31 or 32 chapters or propositions with explication. The extant Arabic versions have just 31.

First Cause governs things without mixing with them (*res creatas omnes praeter quod commisceatur cum eis*) and emanates on them the power of life and goodnesses (*influit super eas virtutem vitae et bonitates*). In 21/22 what is merely self-sufficient is not able to create another thing (*non potest creare aliquid aliud*), while the First Cause is above the complete and perfect and creates things and emanates goodnesses (*creans res et influens bonitates*). In 22/23 God governs (*regens [...] est deus*) as the Creator of the intelligence, the first created (*primum creatum*), governs all through the governance of the intelligence (*res, quae recipiunt regimen intelligentiae, recipiunt regimen creatoris intelligentiae*). In 23/24 the First Cause is in things as the First Creating Cause (*causam primam creantem*). In 28/29 simple self-subsistent substances are said to be created without time (*creata sine tempore*), while others are created in time (*creata in tempore*) and still others are between these as sempiternal substances with time (*substantiae sempiternae cum tempore*). And, finally, at the end of the final chapter, 31/32, all unity after the true one is said to be acquired and created (*omnis unitas post unum verum est acquisita, creata*), while the Pure True One is the Creator of unities, causing them to be acquired but not itself an acquired unity (*unum verum purum est creans unitates, faciens acquirere, non acquisitum*). There the Pure Entity (*ens purum*) is also the cause of generated temporal things and of all things eternal. While the first chapter explained the dependence of all on the primary cause, the last chapter establishes the existence of one primary cause through this argument from unity.

The purpose of this brief study is to advance some precisions regarding the nature of divine causality as discussed in the original Arabic text of the *LDC*⁹ and to provide some clarifications regarding the meanings of creation in this work. The need for this is prompted by several important considerations of which I now note just two. First, in the account of Hasker quoted above, emanation as necessary and the absence of decision willed and free are listed as characteristics separating emanation from creation₁. Yet in the Arabic *LDC* the language of emanation is present and directly connected with *abda'a* (*creare*) on the part of *al-mubdi'* (*the Creator*). What is more, no discussion of will, choice or decision is found in the Arabic *LDC*. Second, as mentioned earlier, the primary source of most of the reasoning of the *LDC* is derived from selected propositions of the *Elements of Theology* of the Neoplatonist Proclus, while the presence of the thought of Plotinus can be detected directly in chapter 8 (Latin 8/9)

⁹ My concern here is with the traditional version of the *LDC* known in Arabic as either „The Discourse on the Pure Good“ (*Kalām fī maḥḍ al-khair*) or „The Book of Aristotle's Exposition on the Pure Good“ (*Kitāb al-ḥikmah li-Aristūṭūṭālīs fī al-khair al-maḥḍ*). The so-called „De causis II“ is not considered here. Regarding that text, see Pierre Thillet and Saleh Oudaimah, „Proclus Arabe. In nouveau *Liber de causis*?“, in: *Bulletin d'Études Orientales* [Institut français d'Études arabes de Damas] 53-54 (2001-2) 293-368. Also see the recent study of al-ʿĀmirī by Elvira Wakelnig, *Feder, Tafel, Mensch. Al-ʿĀmirī's Kitāb al-Fuṣūl fī l-Maʿālim al-ilāhīya und die arabische Proklos-Rezeption*, Leiden/Boston, 2006.

and indirectly elsewhere, albeit as this thought is found in the *PA*. But Neoplatonic philosophical thought is distinctly cited by Hasker as indicative of a rejection of creation₁. In light of these considerations, the vocabulary chosen by the Latin translator, and the extensive use of the *LDC* as a creationist work by thinkers of the subsequent Latin tradition, it is clear there is a need for study of this work and the meaning of its vocabulary and philosophical assertions in its Arabic context for the determination of the larger considerations both of whether, *pace* Hasker, emanationism and creation in this work are in fact compatible under some definition of creation and of whether the author of the *LDC* may have intended to assert that compatibility.

In what follows here I first provide an account of chapter 1 of the Arabic *LDC* and Proclus on primary and secondary causality. Second, I consider the pseudonymous author's account of agency using the Arabic *fi'l* (act, *actus*) and related forms from its trilateral root *f-ʿ-l* together with his account of *abda'a* and various forms of the trilateral root *b-d-ʿ* which were translated into Latin as *creator*, *creatio*, *creare*, *creans*, *creatum* and related forms. Here I argue that the *LDC* has in fact a notion of creation, but one that is distinct from that of the Abrahamic traditions. Third, I consider a chapter of the *LDC* which seems to indicate that the author of the *LDC* made no such distinction. Finally, I conclude with a summary of what has been accomplished and remarks on the author's apparent conflation of the philosophical notion of *ibdā'* and the religious notion of creation₁ in the context of the project of introducing philosophical principles and reasoning developed from Proclus and Plotinus into the cultural and developing scientific context of Islam in Ninth century Baghdad.

1. Primary and Secondary Causality

The *Elements of Theology* of the Fifth century Athenian Neoplatonist Proclus is the source on which the Arabic *LDC* draws for its account of primary and secondary causality prominent in its opening chapter. It is precisely in Propositions 56 and 57 that Proclus argues for the intrinsic causal presence of the transcendent One or Good in all that is below it, even to the point of asserting that privation of form is from the Good.¹⁰ The transcendence of the One and the multiple levels of hierarchical intermediate realities set forth by Proclus would seem necessarily to indicate a distance so great that the involvement of the One becomes less and less at the lower levels of what proceeds from the One to the point of being absent or nearly so at the lowest level. Instead, argues Proclus, in the case of any effect, insofar as the very being of a secondary cause in

¹⁰ Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, ed. & tr. E. R. Dodds, Oxford 1963, Prop. 57, 56.15-16. Hereafter, Proclus, *ET* 1963.

the emanative hierarchy is owed to a prior cause, it owes to the prior cause also all that it produces by the power of production that it has arising from its own being or existence.

PROP. 56: „ *All that is produced by secondary beings is in a greater measure produced from those prior and more determinative principles from which the secondary were themselves derived.*

For if the secondary has its whole existence from its prior, thence also it receives its power of further production, since productive powers reside in producers in virtue of their existence and form part of their being. But if it owes to the superior cause its power of production, to that superior it owes its character as a cause in so far as it is a cause, a character meted out to it from thence in proportion to its constitutive capacity. If so, the things which proceed from it are caused in virtue of its prior; for the same principle which makes the one a cause makes the other an effect. If so, the effect owes to the superior cause its character as an effect.

Again, it is evident that the effect is determined by the superior principle in a greater measure. For if the latter has conferred on the secondary being the causality which enabled it to produce, it must itself have possessed this causality primitively (prop. 18), and it is in virtue of this that the secondary being generates, having derived from its prior the capacity of secondary generation. But if the secondary is productive by participation, the primal primitively and by communication, the latter is causative in a greater measure, inasmuch as it has communicated to another the power of generating consequents.¹¹

Here Proclus responds to the concern of the distance of the One from the lowest of effects with the principle that the totality of what any secondary (or tertiary or later) cause is or has must be recognized as due to the primary cause, that is, not only the being of the secondary or later cause but also its very power to be productive of anything else or to carry out any activity must be traced to the primary cause. As a consequence, the primary cause, seemingly more causally distant, in fact is more causally present („the effect owes to the superior cause its character as an effect“) insofar as no secondary or later cause can exist or act of itself without reference to the primary cause which makes it a reality.

Then he completes the account of principles of primary and secondary causality in Proposition 57 stressing the priority of the primary cause as cause of the secondary and necessarily cooperative in the action of the secondary. The primary cause, then, is primary because it had within its very self already the power to bring about the secondary and all that the secondary causes and because it is the causal origin of – or simply cause of – the secondary cause's existence and power to be causally efficacious in reference to some third thing in the hierarchy.

¹¹ Proclus, *ET* 1963, 55.

PROP. 57: „Every cause both operates prior to its consequent and gives rise to a greater number of posterior terms.

For if it is a cause, it is more perfect and more powerful than its consequent (prop. 7). And if so, it must cause a greater number of effects: for greater power produces more effects, equal power, equal effects, and lesser power, fewer; and the power which can produce the greater effects upon a like subject can produce also the lesser, whereas a power capable of the lesser will not necessarily be capable of the greater. If, then, the cause is more powerful than its consequent, it is productive of a greater number of effects.

But again, the powers which are in the consequent are present in a greater measure in the cause. For all that is produced by secondary beings is produced in a greater measure by prior and more determinative principles (prop. 56). The cause, then, is cooperative in the production of all that the consequent is capable of producing.

And if it first produces the consequent itself, it is of course plain that it is operative before the latter in the activity which produces it. Thus every cause operates both prior to its consequent and in conjunction with it, and likewise gives rise to further effects posterior to it [...].¹²

What is involved here in Proclus is a metaphysical hierarchy of productive per se causes, not a series of causes such as the production of a child by a parent with those parents caused or produced by their parents, and so forth. In the metaphysical hierarchy discussed here the activity of the lowest requires the actual and continuous presence of the causal activity of all those causes prior in the hierarchy all the way to the first cause in the hierarchy. Note that were the involvement of any one of those causes in the hierarchy to be absent, both the existence and the causal efficacy of everything below that missing link would fail. However, that is not to say that in the sequential production of A, B, and C, were B to be removed, A would not have *the power* to produce C. Proclus reasons that, if A has sufficient *power* to produce in existence B and the power belonging to B enabling it to produce C, then A has sufficient *power* to produce C in the absence of B. That is, in principle the *power* to produce C has to be conceded to be present in A.¹³ In that way A is the primary cause in the series ABC in a way

¹² Proclus, *ET* 1963, 55-57. I omit the last portion of the text which Dodds rightly indicates to be a corollary applying the principles to Soul and Intelligence. The *LDC* does not draw on the corollary.

¹³ This proposition contains the principles of primary causality. However, in practice in the graduated course of the hierarchy the lower is weaker and has more plurality than the higher. Consequently, when this is applied to the hierarchy of beings in the *LDC* the First Cause must first originate or cause only the first effect, the Intellect – which is the first originated being – and only through mediation of Intellect does it originate other things. Hence, in the *LDC* the First Cause is the sole originator of things and sole giver of being to things, but it cannot do so for other things below Intellect without the mediation of Intellect and other higher realities such as Soul and Nature, as mentioned in *LDC* chapter 8 which is discussed below. That is, while A has the power to originate C, it can do so only through B. Hence, while the

that is not open to B or any other number of intermediaries between A and C. In Proposition 70 Proclus makes it clear that this analysis applies not only to the causation of distinct things but also to the causation of the intrinsic constituents of any thing.

PROP. 70: „ *All those more universal characters which inhere in the originative principles both irradiate their participants before the specific characters and are slower to withdraw from a being which has once shared in them.*

For the higher cause begins its operation upon secondary beings before its consequent, and is present concomitantly with the presence of the latter, and is still present and operative when the consequent has ceased to operate; and this is true not only in respect of the range of objects affected (prop. 57) but in regard to each several contingent participant. Thus, for example, a thing must exist before it has life, and have life before it is human. And again, when the logical faculty has failed it is no longer human, but it is still a living thing, since it breathes and feels; and when life in turn has abandoned it existence remains to it, for even when it ceases to live it still has being. So in every case. The reason is that the higher cause, being more efficacious (prop. 56), operates sooner upon the participant (for where the same thing is affected by two causes it is affected first by the more powerful); and in the activity of the secondary the higher is co-operative, because all the effects of the secondary are concomitantly generated by the more determinative cause; and where the former has withdrawn the latter is still present (for the gift of the more powerful principle is slower to abandon the participant, being more efficacious, and also inasmuch as through the gift of its consequent it has made its own irradiation stronger).¹⁴

According to the example in the text of Proclus, this does not mean that human life can be produced without the presence of both being and living, but rather only that the formal characteristic of being is required for the presence of life and that the withdrawal of the formal characteristic of life would not entail the withdrawal of being. However, the withdrawal of being would entail the withdrawal of the posterior formal characteristic of life since being is caused first in the thing by the primary cause. The editor and translator of the *Elements of Theology* by Proclus, E. R. Dodds, indicates this with his parenthetical references to earlier propositions and thereby shows how Proclus intends to draw upon those to establish here that the very condition of existence that makes all other characteristics possible must be traced back to the primary cause alone. The primary cause is the only causal principle that can provide the condition of existence required for the effect (the third) and also the complete constitution of the secondary cause.

LDC argues that the First Cause is the *sole originator*, it does not argue that it is the *sole cause* of the plurality of entities in the hierarchy and of the plurality of individuals within any species.

¹⁴ Proclus, *ET* 1963, 66-67.

For Proclus the purpose of these propositions was to draw attention to the need to think the causal presence of the One in each and every thing posterior to it. Again, to emphasize the key point in this account of primary and secondary causality, in the analysis of any effect in a hierarchy of three or more, the activity of the second upon the third is based on the being and the power of causal activity belonging to the second. But the second (as well as the third and any subsequent others) is ontologically dependent in every way upon the causal activity of the first. That is, in addition to the existence of the second owed to the first, the very being of the power of activity on the part of the second to bring about the third or anything in it is owed in an ontologically prior way to the first, the primary cause.

The author of the Arabic *LDC* brought together these three propositions from Proclus to form in his own way a basic account of primary and secondary causality in the first chapter of this work which sets the theme of the entire work, though it does so in terms of the principles functioning in the metaphysical doctrine of primary causality and without a single mention in the first chapter of the *LDC* of the vocabulary of *abda'a* (*creare*).

Chapter <1>

„Every primary cause emanates more abundantly on its effect than does the universal second cause. And when the universal second cause removes its power from the thing, the universal first cause does not remove its power from it. For the universal first cause acts on the effect of the second cause before the universal second cause which is immediately adjacent to (the effect) acts on (the effect). So when the second cause which is immediately adjacent to the effect acts, its act is not able to do without the first cause which is above (the second cause). And when the second (cause) separates itself from the effect which is immediately adjacent to it, the first cause which is above (the second cause) does not separate itself from (the effect), because it is cause of (the effect's) cause. The first cause, therefore, is more the cause of the thing than its proximate cause which is immediately adjacent to (the thing).

As examples of that we give being, living and man, for the thing must first be a being, then living, then a man. Thus, living is the proximate cause of the man and being is his remote cause. Being, then, is more a cause of the man than living because (being) is a cause of living which is a cause of the man. Likewise, when you make rationality a cause of the man, being is more a cause of the man than rationality because (being) is a cause of (rationality's) cause. The proof is that, when you remove the rational faculty from the man, it does not continue a man but it does continue living, breathing and sensitive. And when you remove living from it, it does not continue living but it does continue being, because being is not removed from it when living is removed. Because the cause is not

removed with the removal of its effect, the man¹⁵ continues being. When the individual is not a man, it is an animal; and when it is not an animal, it is only a being.

So it has become clear and evident that the remote first cause is more encompassing and more a cause of the thing than its proximate cause. On account of that, its act has come to be more strongly adherent to the thing than the act of (the thing's) proximate cause. This came to be so only because the thing is first acted on by the remote power, then secondly it is acted on by the power which is below the first. <Moreover>, the first cause aids the second cause in its act because every act which the second cause effects, the first cause also effects, except that (the first cause) effects it in another, transcendent and more sublime manner. And when the second cause separates itself from its effect, the first cause does not separate itself from it because the act of the first cause is mightier and more strongly adherent to the thing than the act of its proximate cause. Furthermore, the effect of the second cause has been made stable only through the power of the first cause. For, when the second cause effects a thing, the first cause which is above (the second cause) emanates on that thing from its power so that it strongly adheres to that thing and conserves it. Thus, it has become clear and evident that the remote first cause is more a cause of the thing than its proximate cause which is immediately adjacent to (the thing) and that it emanates its power on it and conserves it and does not separate itself from it with the separation of its proximate cause, but rather it remains in it and strongly adheres to it in accordance with what we have made clear and evident.¹⁶

The opening proposition of the *LDC*, then, consists in a restatement of the accounts of primary and secondary causality found in propositions 56, 57 and 70 of the *Elements of Theology* by Proclus. Applied to caused entities of the world this doctrine asserts simply that in the reality of any caused thing in a hierarchy of per se causes the first cause is present and more causally efficacious with regard to any effect than is any intermediate cause. That doctrine is also applied here with regard to the intrinsic constituents of any caused items as well, since rationality is only possible in what is living and living is only possible in what exists. The very existence that is causally traced solely to the primary cause is a necessary prerequisite in the constitution of living existence and rational

¹⁵ Proclus is more precise here by not specifying man as the subject after the removal of rationality than is the author of the *LDC* since the latter speaks of the man from whom rationality and other essential characteristics of what it is to be a man have been removed.

¹⁶ This and other translations of the Arabic *LDC* in this article are substantially revised versions of that found in my edition and study of the Arabic *LDC* in Richard C. Taylor, *The Liber de causis (Kalām fī maḥd al-khair): A Study of Medieval Neoplatonism*, Doctoral Dissertation, University of Toronto 1981. I also draw on some of the analyses of philosophical vocabulary in that work, though the interpretation presented in this article is distinctively different. I provide the referents of pronouns in parentheses in the translation.

existence. The nature of this causal dependence later in the *LDC* is expressed in terms of emanation, something hardly surprising given its Neoplatonic source. Its expression is also framed with the terminology of agency with the employment of the Arabic root *f-'l* as act (*fi'l*), effect (*maf'ūl*), to act (*fa'ala* intransitive), to act on (*fa'ala fī*), to effect or bring about (*fa'ala* transitive), and the passive to be acted on by (*infa'ala min*). What is more, in this context being (*al-annīyah*, *esse*) is not specified as itself a thing, a form or even an act in its own right; rather, it is only a term used to denominate the consequence of an act caused by the primary cause, an act which is also a necessary condition for anything to exist, namely, that it has been caused by the primary cause in a hierarchy of causes. In this first chapter of the *LDC* the term *annīyah* for 'being' or 'existence' is not a technical term nor is it associated with any distinction of essence and existence because the author's purpose here is only to spell out in detail the nature of the doctrine of primary causality. Since the term is used to indicate dependence on a primary cause, one could as easily have used the term 'actuality' to say that the actuality of any second or later cause, including the actuality of its powers, in a hierarchy of primary causality depends on one first cause.¹⁷ And, again, in this first proposition none of the vocabulary of *abda'a* (creare) is found.

The account in *Liber de causis* chapter 1, then, is purely one of primary and secondary causality with its focus on the explanation of the presence in every effect of the causality of the primary cause in any causal hierarchy that begins with a single productive primary cause. (The proof that there is one primary cause as „the First True One“ is found in the closing chapter of the *LDC* which provides the argumentative validation of the account of primary causality explicated in the opening chapter.) Consequently, it is not surprising that the doctrine of primary causality expressed here is one to which many philosophers ascribe in general import, among them Plotinus, Proclus, the author of the *LDC*, al-Kindi, al-Farabi, Avicenna, and many other philosophical and theological thinkers of the Greek, Arabic and Latin traditions. Nothing in reality escapes the causal presence of the First Cause in this teaching on primary and secondary causality.¹⁸

¹⁷ On the notion of actuality in Plotinus and the *Plotiniana Arabica* with particular reference to *Enneads* 6.8, see Richard C. Taylor, „Aquinas, the *Plotiniana Arabica*, and the Metaphysics of Being and Actuality“, in: *Journal of the History of Ideas* 59 (1998), 217-239, particularly 234-238.

¹⁸ Even the contingent actions on the part of things of the sublunar realm which are not necessitated are nevertheless traced to the First Cause as primary cause regardless of what contingent alternative action comes about. In this sense primary causality need not be understood to undermine free choice and moral responsibility for human beings.

2. fa'ala (agere) and abda'a (creare) in the LDC

Throughout the *LDC* forms of *fa'ala* (to act: intransitive; to effect: transitive), *fa'ala fī* (to act on) and *infa'ala* (to be acted on: chapter 1 only) are found corresponding to forms of the Greek *poiein*, *paschein*, and *energein / energeia*.¹⁹ The term *fā'il* (agent) occurs a number of times and is used in chapter 19 to denote the First Cause as a true agent (*fā'ilun ḥuqqun*) because it acts immediately in virtue of its own being (*bi-annīyati-hi*), without there being any intermediary (*waslatun*) or addition (*ziyādatan*) between it and its effect. Proposition 122 of Proclus – on which chapter 19 is based – concerns governance, scil. providence, on the part of divine beings, the gods. The author of the *LDC* transforms it into an account of the governance of the First Cause and writes, „The First Cause governs over all originated things (*al-ashyā'a al-mubtada'ta kulla-hā*: note the form from the root *b-d-*²⁰) without mixing with them.“ He later adds, „[T]he First Cause is eternally stable and subsistent in its pure unity and governs over all originated things [...] For the First Good emanates goodnesses on all things in a single emanation, except that every one of the things receives of that emanation in accordance with its power and its being (*annīyati-hi*). The First Good emanates goodnesses on all things in a single manner because it is goodness – through its being, its entity and its power (*bi-annīyati-hi wa-huwwīyati-hi wa-quwwati-hi*) – only inasmuch as it is goodness, and goodness and entity (*al-huwwīyah*)²⁰ are a single thing.“²¹

The author draws on Proclus but then goes on to provide his own account of the issue of true action and primary causality in a summary after the lines directly dependent on Proclus.²² There the author introduces a notion of

¹⁹ See Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, 342-3.

²⁰ In the *LDC* there is no clear distinction between *huwwīyah/ens/entity* and *annīyah/esse/being*.

²¹ *LDC* 19. Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, Arabic 221-223; English 315 (revised).

²² In the final half of the chapter, the author follows Proclus only in the first two sentences. „We resume and say, then, that for every agent which acts solely through its being there is no intermediary and no other thing intermediate between it and its effect. What is intermediary between the agent and the effect is only an addition to the being: *I mean that, when the agent acts through an instrument, it does not act through its being and its being is composite. So for that reason the recipient <in that case> receives through a intermediary between it and its agent; and the agent is then distinct from its act and does not govern with authentic and pervasive governance. As for the agent which is such that between it and its act there is no intermediary at all, the agent <here> is a true agent and a true governor which effects things with the utmost of thoroughness beyond which there can be no other thoroughness <of greater degree> and which governs its act with the utmost of governance. For it governs over the thing in the manner in which it acts, and it acts only through its entity, so <through> its entity it also governs it. Due to that it has come to govern and to act with the utmost of precision and governance in which there is no variation and no deviation. And the acts and governance on the part of the first causes are variegated only according to the merit of the recipient.*“ Emphasis added to indicate what is not from Proclus. Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, Arabic 221-222; English, 315 (revised).

thoroughly pervasive governance to the utmost degree implying that this penetrates through all things. That this governance takes place without instrument and immediately in virtue of the being of the First Cause makes this agent a true agent that by the very act of its being is „a true agent and a true governor which effects (*yaf'alu*, makes, brings about) things with the utmost of thoroughness beyond which there can be no other thoroughness <of greater degree> and which directs its act with the utmost of governance.“ Like primary causality, through its one and only act which is not distinct from its being the First Cause's governing action penetrates to all things, while any governance or providential action involving an instrument is one in which the agent is distinct from its act and unable to exercise authentic (*ṣaḥīḥun*) governance.

This notion of true agency on the part of the First Cause also appears in the *PA* numerous times. For example, in the *Theology of Aristotle* we find, „The intellect [...] is the first act of the One True Agent“.²³ In the *Sayings of the Greek Wiseman* the author writes that the First Agent is also the cause of the entity (*huw'iyah*) of soul through the mediation of the intelligence. Furthermore, the First does not act through a form of its own, for in the *PA* and in chapter 8 (8/9) of the *LDC* the First is said to be without form (*ṣūrah*, *ḥilyah*) and to be „only being“, (*annīyah faqaṭ*).²⁴ Similar to what is found in *LDC* 19, in the *Sayings of the Greek Wiseman* we find that „The First Agent is a complete (*tāmmatun*) cause, for it is the cause of the entity (*huw'iyah*) and form (*ṣūrah*) of the thing without intermediary.“ Here the intelligence is said to be a cause of things below it but „it is not a complete cause of the thing because it is only the cause of the thing's form, not the cause of entity.“²⁵ As Peter Adamson notes, in the *Sayings of the Greek Wiseman* the notion of will (*al-irādah*) on the part of the First Cause is rejected because it would not then act in virtue of its own being (*bi-annīyati-hi*), while the first effect, the intellect, acts through knowing which is a condition for willing. Rather, „will does not precede the act of the First Agent

²³ *PA Theology of Aristotle*, ed. Badawi, 95.16-17; Lewis tr., 469 n. 27. See Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 191-192; and Peter Adamson, *Al-Kindi*, Oxford, 2007, 57-62.

²⁴ *PA Sayings*, ed. Badawi, 185.12-13; Lewis tr., 281, n. 14. This language is also in the *Proclus Arabus* texts edited by Gerhard Endress in *Proclus Arabus. Zwanzig Abschnitte aus der Institutio Theologica in arabischer Übersetzung*, Wiesbaden 1973, with the First Cause called „only being“ (*annīyah faqaṭ*) and „only entity“ (*huw'iyah faqaṭ*) as free of qualities and attributes and is said to produce all things as First Agent. *Proclus Arabus*, 72.4-9. At *Proclus Arabus*, 21.30-38 we find, „If this is as we have mentioned, then it has been proven correct that there things are which are not material but rather only forms, and that there another thing is which has no matter and *no form at all*, but rather is only entity (*huw'iyah faqaṭ*). This is the True One above whom there is nothing else and who is the Cause of causes. It has been made plain also by what we mentioned that the things are divided into three divisions. For either the thing is matter with form, so that its being is formal and material; or the thing is a form only, so that its being is formal, not material; or the thing is *being only*, so that its being is *neither material nor formal*. This <latter> is the First Cause above whom there is no other cause, as we have said and made evident above.“ Emphasis added. My translation.

²⁵ *PA Sayings*, Badawi, 185.4-19, Lewis tr., 281, nn. 105-111. My translations here.

because (the First Agent) acts by its being alone (*bi-anni-hi faqa t*).²⁶ The text in the *Sayings of the Greek Wiseman* then goes on to stress that the First Agent does not wish (*lam yaridu*) the origination of intellect such that it comes about after an act of will (*al-irādah*) because there was no willing (*al-irādah*) preceding its act. Rather, it would be a sign of deficiency for there to be will (*al-irādah*) between it and its product (*baina-hu wa baina mafūli-hi*) since it does not go from one action to another but instead „originates things all at once (*ibtada'a-hā dafatan wāhidatan*).“²⁷ It is above substance, intellect and sight, yet in its complete unity „it sees and knows its own essence (*dhata-hu*) which is the essence above all essences“ and it is itself „the knowledge above every knowledge because it is the First Knowledge“ and not like the knowledge that is in some second that needs knowledge of a first substance before it. A similar description of the First is also found in *LDC* 8 where the First Cause is said to be „above intelligence, soul and nature because it is the Originator of all things.“ There Divine Knowledge (*al-ilm al-ilāhī*) is attributed to it and is asserted to be unlike that of intellect or soul because it is the Originator of every knowledge.²⁸ These texts from the *PA* and *LDC* chapter 19 are clearly connected in meaning and vocabulary. The notion that the First acts immediately in virtue of its very being, a key principle of Neoplatonism,²⁹ is found in each and it is this which distinguishes the First from the intelligence according to both Arabic sources. In the *PA* the author connects these considerations with will (*al-irādah*) and rejects will as an attribute of the First, while in *LDC* 19 will (*al-irādah*) is not mentioned. In fact, will does not occur at all in the entire *LDC*, although a verb from the same root does occur in *LDC* chapter 22. There the author writes paraphrasing and modifying Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, Proposition 122, „the things which the governance of the intelligence does not reach, the governance of the Originator of the intelligence (*mubdi'i al-aqli*, Latin *creatoris intelligentiae*) already reaches. For nothing whatsoever escapes His³⁰ governance

²⁶ Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 132. *PA Sayings*, Badawi 1955, 174.

²⁷ *PA Sayings*, Badawi 1955, 174.0-175.16; Lewis tr., 321-323, ## 105-120. My translations here.

²⁸ Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, Arabic 178-179, English 299 (revised).

²⁹ Detailed discussion of this profoundly important notion of causality *autō tō einai* is beyond the parameters of this article. For a valuable discussion, see Cristina D'Ancona Costa, „Plotinus and later Platonic philosophers on the causality of the First Principle“, in: *The Cambridge Companion to Plotinus*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson, Cambridge 1996, Cambridge Collections online, 15. September 2011. DOI: 10.1017/CCOL0521470935.016 356-385, esp. 365-367. D'Ancona Costa also discussed this notion in the *LDC* in her article, „La doctrine néoplatonicienne de l'être entre l'antiquité tardive et le moyen âge. Le *Liber de causis* par rapport à ses sources“, in her: *Recherches sur le Liber de causis*, Paris 1995, 121-153, especially 146-153, where she argues that the *LDC* is influenced by the writings of the pseudo-Dionysius. If that is the case, it raises the question of Divine freedom in the ps.-Dionysius, an issue beyond the limits of this article. However, it remains that Divine freedom of will and the possibility of a refraining from emanative creative causality is not found in the *LDC*.

³⁰ The issue of pronoun gender in the *LDC* is peculiar to chapter 22 where the First

because He wishes (*yurīdu*, Latin *vult*) all things to attain His goodness at once (*ma'an*). For not everything yearns for the intelligence and is eager to attain it, while all things do yearn for the First Good and are avidly eager to attain Him. That no one doubts!³¹

The middle sentence of this quotation, „For nothing [...] at once“, has no corresponding text in the *Elements of the Theology*, while the sentence immediately preceding it and that immediately following it do have corresponding texts in Proclus.³² Hence, this is a remark added by the author. Yet, if the author of the *LDC* wished to state something distinctive about divine will, there are more than enough opportunities for such a thing to be said directly and with the use of *irādah* (*will*) or other related forms. For these reasons and because it would contradict the teaching on the First as acting by its being alone or through its very being, I decline to see in the case of *yurīdu* – which is from the same trilateral root as *irādah*, *r-w-d* – a need to translate it as ‚it wills‘ and instead render it as ‚it wishes‘ to indicate that the governance of the First Cause and First Originator as the Good is meant at once to extend to all reality by the action of its very being which is not distinct from its essence. Consequently, there is no mention or reference to divine will or divine choice of any sort in the *LDC*. In fact, on the basis of the discussion of the activity of the First Cause as taking place by its very being (*bi-annīyati-hi*, *bi-anni-hi*), the common doctrine here is that the existence or positing of the First Cause immediately and necessarily – without intermediate act or temporal pause of any sort – realizes the existence or positing of the first caused thing, the Intellect, sometimes itself called the first being in the sense of first originated after the First. The First is also said in the *PA Sayings of the Greek Wiseman* to be pure cause and above both natural and volitional necessity of which it is the cause with the result that the emanation from it is above the categories of nature or will.³³

The root *b-d-*‘ in the fourth form (causative) is found as *mubdi*‘ in the texts discussed immediately above and I have chosen to render it for the present as „originator“. The eighth form (reflective or passive) occurs as well, as a participle for a thing originated in the passive, *mubtada*‘ or the originator in the active, *mubtadi*‘.³⁴ These forms the Latin translator chose not unreasonably to render with forms of *creare*, *to create*, as indicated in the beginning of this article by my summary of the use of forms of *creare* in the *LDC*. In the Arabic *LDC*, as in the

Cause is identified with *Allāh*, God. This is discussed below in section 3.

³¹ *LDC* 22. Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, Arabic 237-38; English 319-20 (substantially revised). Proclus, *ET* 1963, 108-109.

³² Cf. Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, 1981, 238.

³³ Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, 365: Oxford Marsh 539 f.24v13-25r8. The text, translated by Lewis (see n. 4 above) in *Plotini opera* II, 237, ## 62-63, is discussed in Adamson, *The Arabic Plotinus*, 147 ff. Also see Peter Adamson, „A note on Freedom in the Circle of al-Kindi“, in: *Abbasid Studies: Occasional Papers of the School of Abbasid Studies*, Cambridge, 6-10 July 2002, Leuven/Dudley, Mass. 2003, 199-207, especially 202 sqq.

³⁴ No forms from the root *b-d-*‘ appear in the *Proclus Arabus* texts edited by Endress.

PA, these forms are used to indicate the bringing to existence of something by an act of the First Cause, an act deemed to be described by use of this terminology solely in reference to the primary causality of the First Cause. In the *LDC* at chapter 17 it is said that the First Entity (*al-hw̄w̄yāh al-ūlā*) which is the Cause of causes alone gives entity (*hw̄w̄yāh*) to all things by the mode of origination (*ibdā'*).

„We resume and say, then, that the First Entity is quiescent and is the Cause of causes, and if it gives all things entity, it gives it in the manner of origination. The first life gives life to what is below, not in the manner of origination, but in the manner of form (*bi-naw'i šūratin*). And, likewise, the intelligence gives knowledge and the other things to what is below it only in the manner of form, not in the manner of origination (*bi-naw'i ibdā'in*), because the manner of origination belongs to the First Cause alone.“³⁵

In light of these texts, the causality of origination in the *PA* and the *LDC* seems to be distinctively different from that of creation₁ – if Hasker's account is accepted – for the origination of reality as described here is without will and takes place immediately upon the positing of the First Cause without pause of any sort and without any action additional to the being of the First Cause. Hence, the teaching of the *LDC* can be reasonably be said to be in accord with that of Proclus and also Plotinus in reference to the issue of primary causality. It involves an emanation from higher to lower which must be immediate upon the assertion or existence of the cause. Certainly such causality is beyond both that of nature which involves motion and change and that of form and what is entailed by form as necessity of nature and also beyond that of necessity by some extrinsic compulsion. Let us call extrinsic compulsion necessity₃ and what follows on the basis of the nature or form of a thing necessity₂. Yet, insofar as it involves the immediate positing of the effect upon the positing of the cause, this too is a kind of necessity albeit surely of another sort, so let us call it necessity₁ or transcendent necessity. This latter necessity₁ is beyond the nature of will where will might denote deliberation, choice, or weighing of alternatives, characteristics of human will and action. It then does not involve a selection between alternatives with respect to the emanation of goodness since there is no will and no deliberation. Rather, reality under necessity₁ involves what cannot be otherwise than the overflowing of reality from the First as the Good.³⁶ This form of origination or *ibdā'* (*creatio*) then, does not allow for the possibility of a stopping or denial of the emanation of reality from the First. What is more, since the First Cause has no form it does not act through the necessity of a natu-

³⁵Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, Arabic 215-216; English 312 (revised).

³⁶At the end of *LDC* 8 the author writes, „If someone says that it has to have a form (*ḥilyah*), then we say that its form (*ḥilyah*) is infinite and its individual nature is the Pure Good emanating all goodnesses upon the intellect and upon the rest of the things through the mediation of the intellect.“ Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, Arabic 189, English 300 (revised). Since form involves delimitation the notion of an infinite form is oxymoronic and intentionally so.

re or form but only through its very self, its very being, its very goodness which are one. To this extent, then, it does not fit under Hasker's conception of creation₁, which he characterizes as „common to the monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam [...] a free act on God's part; he has no ‚need‘ to create but has done so out of love and generosity.“³⁷ If we are to allow this notion of *ibdā'* (*creatio*) – up to this point called ‚origination‘ in this article – to be called creation, let us call it for the present creation₂ as emanative origination and let it be specified that it entails the negation of will, choice, the necessity of nature characteristic of things having nature or form (which is necessity₂), and also external compulsion (which is necessity₃). The act that follows immediately upon the being of the First is the emanation of all reality from it as the Good. This emanative causality founded on the First as the Good is common to Plotinus, Proclus, the *PA*, the *LDC*, al-Farabi, and Avicenna. For each of these it involves the causing by the primary cause of the existence of something after nothing as well as a continuous ontological activity of causing upon which all reality after itself depends.³⁸

Philosophical support for the view that creation₂ is suitably considered creation *tout court* can be found in the early writings of a sophisticated reader of the *LDC*, Thomas Aquinas. In his first major work, the *Commentary on the Sentences of Peter Lombard* (1252-56), at Book 2 d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, resp. Aquinas writes that:

³⁷ See note 5 above.

³⁸ Detailed consideration of al-Farabi and Avicenna on this issue as well as careful consideration of the thought of al-Kindi are beyond the parameters of the present article. I intend to prepare another study of these issues in their thought on another occasion. Regarding al-Farabi, see the first two chapters of his *On the Perfect State*, ed. & tr. Richard Walzer, Oxford 1985; rpt Chicago 1998. For Avicenna, see *The Metaphysics of the Healing*, tr. Michael E. Marmura, Provo, Utah 2005, Book 9, Ch. 6, notably 339, Arabic lines 8-12. Also see the account of Olga Lizzini in her *Fluxus (fayḍ). Indagine sui fondamenti della metafisica e della fisica di Avicenna*, Bari 2011, 300-315, and her discussion of the *Theology of Aristotle* from the *PA*, *LDC*, al-Kindi and al-Farabi as predecessors and sources for Avicenna at 27-69. Although al-Kindi in his treatise on the True Agent sets out a clear account of primary causality in accord with Ch. 1 of the *LDC*, his understanding of Divine creation as willed and as creation in time separates him from the others listed above. See Adamson, *al-Kindi*, 46-105, especially 57-71. But also see Cristina D'Ancona Costa, „Al-Kindi et l'auteur du *Liber de causis*“, in: *Recherches sur le Liber de causis*, 155-194. The account of divine causality and ontological dependence in Averroes, another major thinker of the Arabic tradition, is quite different and is something I will address elsewhere. Also see Cristina D'Ancona Costa's „Avicenna and the *Liber de causis*: A contribution to the dossier“, in: *Revista Española de Filosofía Medieval* 7 (2000) 95-114. Here I add regarding Avicenna to note that at he seems to be discussing the *PA*, al-Kindi and perhaps the *LDC* at *Metaphysics* 6.2 (Marmura, 203-205) where he provides a definition of *ibdā'* and also at *Metaphysics* 9.4 (Marmura, 330-331) where he reasons that *ibdā'* should not be restricted to the creative causality of the First Cause alone but rather suitably characterizes the causality in the emanation of intelligences as each of the higher among these causes the existence of its immediately lower intelligence by metaphysical agent causality (cf. *Metaphysics* 6.1, Marmura, 194-195).

„the notion of creation involves two things. The first is that it presupposes nothing in the thing which is said to be created [...] creation is said to be from nothing because there is nothing which preexists creation as uncreated. The second is that in the thing which is said to be created non-being is prior to being, not by a priority of time or duration [...] but by a priority of nature in such a way that, if the created thing is left to itself, non-being would result. For it has being only from the influence of a superior cause.“

These two criteria are precisely those found in the account of primary causality in the *LDC* derived from Proclus and common to the teachings of Plotinus, Proclus, the *PA*, the *LDC*, al-Farabi, and Avicenna. What is more, Aquinas goes on in the same passage to insist that this is creation and has been taught as such by the philosophers. He writes,

„For those two reasons creation is said to be from nothing in two ways. One is such that the negation would negate the order of creation in regard to something preexisting implied by the preposition *from* (*ex*), so that (creation) would be said to be from nothing because it is not from something preexisting. That is with respect to the first. The other is such that the order of creation in regard to nothing preexisting would remain affirmed by nature so that creation would be said to be from nothing because the thing created naturally has non-being prior to being. If these two suffice for the notion of creation, then creation can be demonstrated in this way and in this way the philosophers have asserted creation. However, if we take a third <consideration> to be required for the notion of creation so that in duration the thing created has non-being before being so that it is said to be from nothing because it is temporally after nothing, creation cannot be demonstrated in this way nor is this conceded by the philosophers, but is supposed by faith.“³⁹

Here it is clear that Aquinas in this early work with good reason rejects the understanding much later proposed by Hasker and clearly asserts criteria for the use of the term „creation“ that fit precisely what has been found here to be present in the *LDC*, the *PA*, and Proclus and which can also be said to be present in Plotinus, al-Farabi and Avicenna. It appears then that it is quite appropriate to consider creation to be of at least two sorts, creation₂ which is based on the notion of primary causality involving necessity₁ resulting from the First as the Good and creation₁ which is also based on primary causality but adds the Abrahamic understanding that the First creates without any sort of

³⁹ Thomas Aquinas, *In 2 Sent.* d. 1, q. 1, a. 2, resp., *Scriptum super libros Sententiarum Magistri Petri Lombardi*, Pierre Mandonnet, ed., Vol. 2, Paris 1929, 18. My translations here are based on a pre-publication version of the text of Aquinas provided by Dr. Adriano Oliva, O.P., president of the *Commissio Leonina*, Paris. The criterion of temporal creation indicated in the third is shared with al-Kindi, though here Aquinas considers it something known only through Christian faith. Aquinas also holds that creation is free and not necessitated. Detailed discussion of his views in relation to his other writings and in relation to the views set out in this article will have to await another occasion.

necessity, need not have created at all, and acts by will, in some understanding of that term.⁴⁰

3. A Possible Objection: *LDC* 22 (Latin 22/23)

In light of the foregoing, it appears that the teachings in the *LDC* are not properly described as those of creation₁ as understood in the religions of the Abrahamic traditions since the freedom not to originate or not to create is not present in the *LDC*. Rather, the doctrine set out in the *LDC* is that of creation₂, namely, of emanation in the context of a clear understanding of the nature of primary causality but without involving will, deliberation or choice on the part of the First Cause in the origination of the world. That is, the doctrine of creation₂ in the *LDC* is not a religious doctrine of creation₁ of the sort described by Hasker.

However, an objection to this view might be formed on the basis of what is found in chapter 22 (Latin 22/23) of the *LDC*. There the author follows Proclus, *Elements of Theology*, proposition 134 closely albeit paraphrasing and simplifying as well as drawing upon phraseology found in the *PA*.⁴¹ The author also draws on earlier reasoning from various chapters of the *LDC*, among them 1 for primary causality, 4 (4/5) for the identification of the first created as the intelligence, and 8 (8/9) but particularly 19 (19/20) for governance, scil. the exercise of providence. Yet *LDC* 22 (22/23) is unique in the work for distinctly identifying the First Cause as *Allāh*, the Deity of the Abrahamic traditions, accompanied by laudatory benedictions. Here is a translation of this chapter:

„Every divine intelligence knows things inasmuch as it is an intelligence and governs them inasmuch as it is divine. For the special characteristic of the intelligence is knowing and its completeness and perfection are that it be a knower. But that which governs is God – *may He be blessed and exalted!* – because He fills things with goodnesses. The intelligence is the first thing originated (*mubtada'*) and most similar to God – *may He be exalted!* –, so in virtue of that it came to govern the things which are below it. And just as God –

⁴⁰ In his late *Commentary on the Peri Hermeneias*, Aquinas writes that God is existing outside the order of beings and that „all things depend on divine will as on a first cause which transcends the order of necessity and contingency (*omnes dependant a uoluntate diuina sicut a prima causa que transcendit ordinem necessitatis et contingencie*).“ *Expositio libri Peryermenias* (Rome: Commissio Leonina; Paris 1989 [Opera omnia,1,1] 78, 452-454. My thanks to Andrea Robiglio for calling my attention to this passage.

⁴¹ The *PA* identifies the First with the one God of the Arabic tradition with terms such as *al-bārī* and *al-khāliq*, each Qur'anic words for Creator. It is worthy of note that each of the two extant Arabic manuscripts of the *LDC* have *Allāh* (God) and *al-ilāh* (the god) in different passages, perhaps a vestige of the original translation from Proclus. Note also that the chapter ends with *lā yashakku fī dhalika shākkun* „that no one doubts“, which is nearly identical with *PA Theology*, ed. Badawi 73.7, *lā yashakku fī dhalika ahadun*, Lewis, p.439, n.49.

may He be blessed and exalted! – pours forth goodness on things, so too the intelligence pours forth knowledge on the things below it. But, although the intelligence governs the things which are below it, nevertheless God – *may He be blessed and exalted!* – precedes the intelligence in governance and governs the things with a governance more exalted than and superior to the governance of the intelligence, because He is what gives <the power> to govern to the intelligence.

The proof of that is that the things which the governance of the intelligence does not reach, the governance of the Originator (*mubdi'*, *creatoris*) of the intelligence already reaches. For nothing whatsoever escapes His governance because He wishes⁴² that all things attain His goodness at once. For not every thing yearns for the intelligence and is eager to attain it, but all things do yearn for the First Good and are avidly eager to attain Him: that no one doubts!⁴³

In the corresponding Proposition 134 of the *Elements of Theology* Proclus reiterates the doctrine of primary causality stating that the Deity (*to theion*), in this case referring to the One, the Good, extends its influence beyond the reach of intelligence, something clearly expressed in the first sentence of the second paragraph above. Yet that formulaic benedictions characteristic of the Abrahamic traditions occur in this chapter of the *LDC* gives some reason for the belief that for the author God as mentioned here is the Deity of the Abrahamic traditions. Further, God – here called „the Originator“ (*mubdi'*, *creatoris*) and also the First Good – is the First Cause of all mentioned throughout the *LDC*. On the basis of the evidence of the *LDC*, the author himself indeed seems to have made precisely this identification and as well to have held that there is no distinction between creation₁ and creation₂. Precisely how the author of the *LDC* would have dealt with the issue of divine will and free creation or even whether it would have been a concern to him has to remain an unknown matter of speculation since, as pointed out earlier, the vocabulary of will (*irādah* and related terms) does not appear in the *LDC*. On the basis of the texts we have it is apparent that the author identified Neoplatonic causality *autō tō einai* or causality *bi-annīyati-hi*, that is, causality in virtue of its very being, as characteristic of the True One, the Originator/Creator, the First Cause, the Good, God, since no activity can be added to its essence without introducing plurality into what is asserted to be pure Unity. Perhaps this should be of no surprise since the same issue is found in the thought of Avicenna for whom the First Cause acts not by necessity of nature or external or internal constraint of the sort found below the First and associated with what has form, nor by choice, deliberation or will, but as the Good,⁴⁴ which was also taught by Plotinus.

⁴² Note that earlier in section 2 I set aside the possibility that *yurīdu* here is used to indicate willing.

⁴³ Taylor, *The Liber de causis*, Arabic 235-238; English 319-320 (revised).

⁴⁴ See the account of Lizzini in her *Fluxus (fayḍ). Indagine sui fondamenti della metafisica e della fisica di Avicenna* cited in note 34.

4. Conclusion

In section 1 I considered the opening chapter of the *LDC* with its sources in Proclus providing the translations of Dodds for the latter and providing my own translation of the Arabic of *LDC* chapter 1. My purpose was to establish that chapter 1 of the *LDC* is fully devoted to setting forth an account of primary and secondary causality whereby the causal presence of the First Cause as primary cause is argued to be more causally present to any effect than is any other cause intermediate between those two. For the author of the *LDC* this is the foundation for the argument that the First Cause originates or creates while all other causes act by form and provide form. Hence, the reasoning of primary causality explicates the view that there is but one First Cause or God and that the origination or creation of being is characteristic only of the First.

In section 2 I examined the uses of forms of the terms *fa'ala* (*agere*, to act) and *abda'a* (*creare*, to originate, to create) showing similarities of language and doctrine in the *LDC* and the *PA*. Of particular importance is the presence of the Neoplatonic notion of a thing acting by its very being and not by an act added to its being. The author of the *LDC* adopted this notion from Proclus and in all likelihood from the *PA* to argue that this sort of causality *bi-annīyati-hi* or in virtue of its very being belongs only to the First Cause. In the *PA* this notion is associated with the view of the First as above will, choice and decision and not necessitated in its actions by any internal necessity (necessity₂) based on its nature or form or by any external necessity or compulsion (necessity₃). However, insofar as it is the One and the Good, its emanative causality of all other realities is not an act additional to its essence but rather follows immediately upon its existence as the Good, the One, the First Cause (necessity₁). After arguing that this activity is suitably called creation and distinguishing it as creation₂ in contrast to creation₁ where this latter is a religious notion involving Divine free will, I cited the early work of Thomas Aquinas in support of determining each of these to be suitably called creation and rejected Hasker's view that emanative origination should not be called creation. The foundation for this is the explanation of primary causality which is in accord with what Aquinas found in Avicenna and also in the *LDC*, a work which in that period Aquinas attributed to Aristotle.

In section 3 I weighed whether the use of *Allāh* and of benedictions in *LDC* 22 constitutes an objection to my explanation of *ibdā'* in the *LDC* as creation₂ involving an emanation necessitated by the First as the Good (necessity₁) since the use of *Allāh* and of benedictions may be indicative of the Abrahamic religious observance and a conception of free creation or creation₁. I found in the *LDC* no evidence for a conception of free creation as creation₁ and concluded that for the author of the *LDC* the emanative origination *bi-annīyati-hi*, that is, in virtue of its very being, is understood as creation *tout court*.

The introduction of Greek philosophical teachings into the Islamic milieu

of the Ninth century was both complicated and controversial. It was controversial because it involved a claim to truth about matters relating to the nature and structure of the world and also about the causes of the world, including the First Cause or God, where religious believers already had answers to these matters in holy scriptures. It was complicated because this meant that the value of philosophy had to be argued and its apparent or real contradictions to central religious teachings – such as the free creation of all reality by the one God – at least initially in the early period of the „Circle of al-Kindi“⁴⁵ posed possible moments of conflict and correction. *bi-annīyati-hi*, that is, causality in virtue of its very being. In the introduction to his *On First Philosophy* Al-Kindi himself argues that philosophy and in particular metaphysics is just another way to the truth and to the true understanding of God and His creation; hence, when properly understood, philosophy should be accepted along side Islamic revelation as another way to the same truths found in religion.⁴⁶ Al-Kindi's edition of the *PA's Theology of Aristotle* sets out the doctrine of emanative creation *bi-annīyati-hi* and, just as we find in the *LDC*, he himself adopted the doctrine of primary causality in his short treatise on *The True Agent* and presents a proof of divine unity in his *On First Philosophy*. Yet, al-Kindi embraced not an eternal emanative creation₂ but a doctrine of temporal creation₁ by a divine willing⁴⁷ in accord with Islamic religious teaching. The teachings of the *LDC* on creation, however, remain clearly within the philosophical tradition of the Neoplatonism.⁴⁸

⁴⁵ See G. Endress, „The Circle of al-Kindi. Early Arabic Translations from the Greek and the Rise of Islamic Philosophy“, in: *The Ancient Tradition in Christian and Islamic Hellenism. Studies on the Transmission of Greek Philosophy and Sciences Dedicated to H. J. Drossaart Lulofs*, ed. Gerhard Endress and Remke Kruk, Leiden 1997, 43-76.

⁴⁶ The entire preface is dedicated to the advocacy for philosophy to be accepted in the context of Islam. For the text, see *Oeuvres Philosophiques et Scientifiques d'al-Kindi*, ed. Roshdi Rashed and Jean Jolivet, Vol. 2, Leiden/Boston/Köln 1998, 8-17.

⁴⁷ See note 36 above. Also see Adamson, *Al-Kindi*, 57-62 on *The True Agent*, 47-57 on divine unity, and 98-101 on eternity and temporal creation.

⁴⁸ I am pleased to express my thanks to Cristina D'Ancona Costa, Jan Opsomer, Luis X. López-Farjeat, Andrea Robligio and Owen Goldin taking the time to read this article and for offering several very valuable suggestions.