Reason and Religion

Religion and Society: Winter, 2009

I. **Islamic Philosophy**
   A. **Central Figures**
   B. **Aristotelianism**

II. **Background to Latin Philosophy: Rise of Universities**
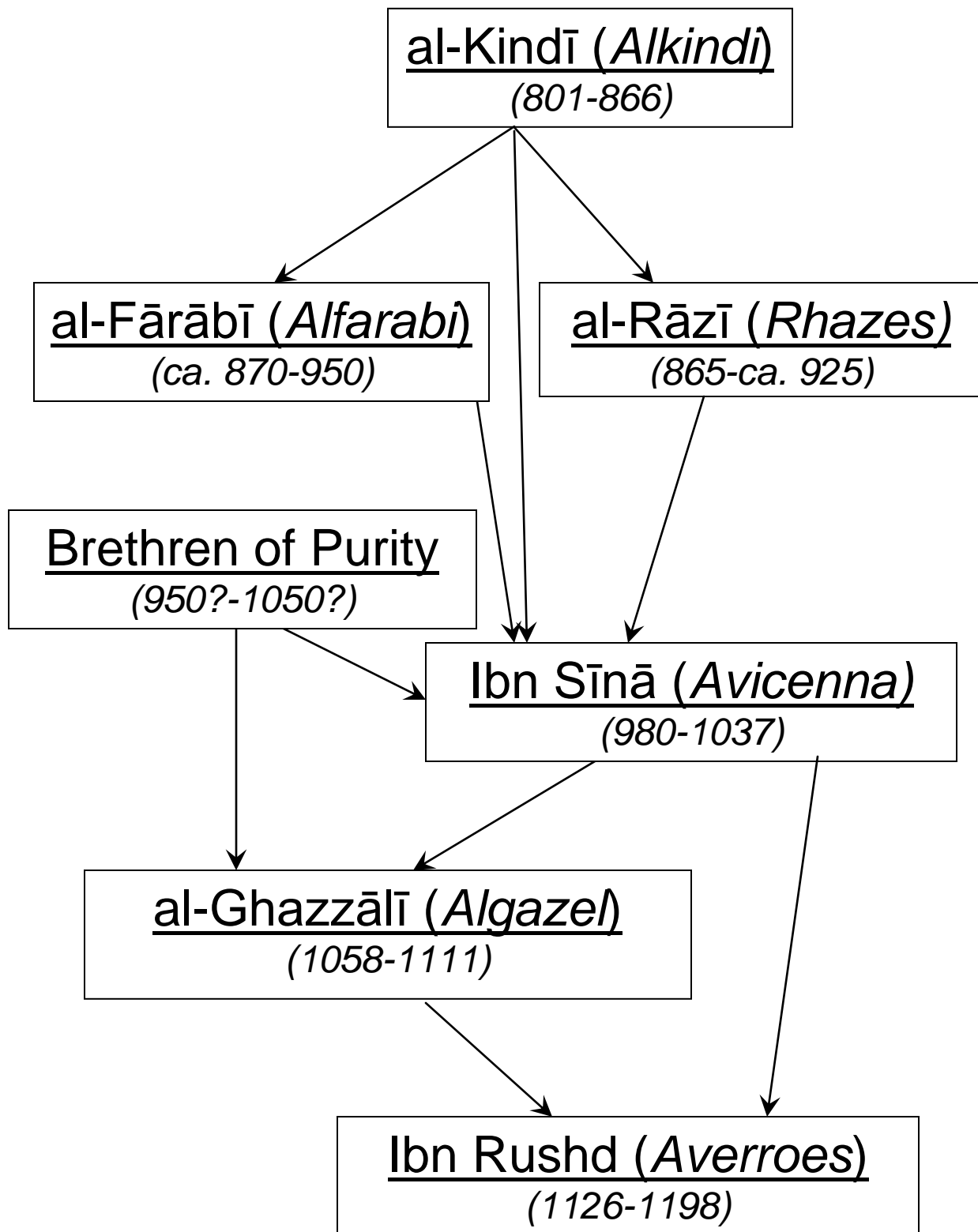
III. **Aquinas**

IV. **A Rationalist Definition of God**

Islamic Philosophy (*falsafah*)

Abbasids – Baghdad (founded 762)
- Translations into Arabic of the Aristotelian corpus
- Inheritor of classical knowledge
  o mathematics
  o medicine
  o astronomy
  o physics
  o philosophy
- Intellectual center, 8th & 9th c's

Córdoba: Intellectual center, 10th-12th c's

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al-Kindī (Alkindi)
(801-866)
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al-Fārābī (Alfarabi)          al-Rāzī (Rhazes)
(ca. 870-950)                 (865-ca. 925)
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Brethren of Purity
(950?-1050?)
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Ibn Sīnā (Avicenna)
(980-1037)
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al-Ghazzālī (Algazel)
(1058-1111)
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Ibn Rushd (Averroes)
(1126-1198)
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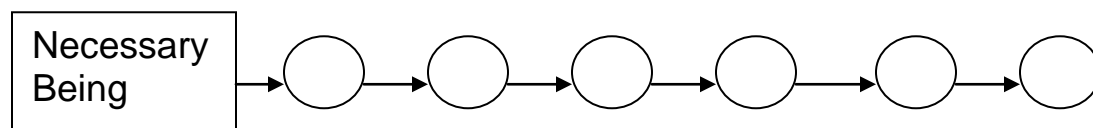
Aristotle and Islam

Aristotle's Metaphysics
- Prime Mover (God) is remote
- God knows only universals — doesn't intervene in history
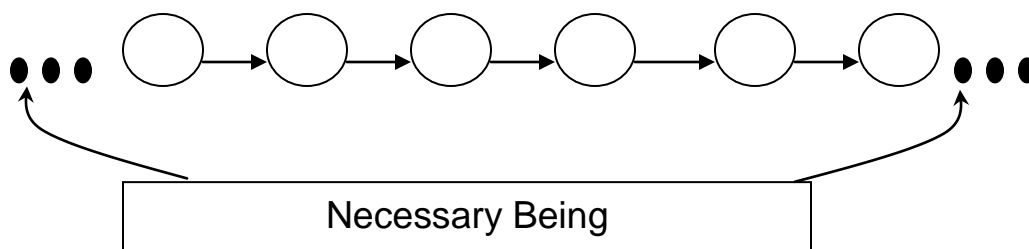- Universe is eternal

Ibn Sīnā
How to reconcile Aristotle with Islam?

Two pictures: Literalist …

…and figurative

Ibn Rushd (Averroes)

Translations from Arabic into Latin
Late 12th-early 13th c's
Aristotle's metaphysics and ethics
Ibn Rushd's commentaries
Known as "the Commentator"

"Averroism": A Scholastic Heresy
(_Note_: Not all were Ibn Rushd's views!)

1. The world is eternal.

2. God does not know particulars.

3. There is no free will.

4. Independent of body, potential and active intellect are unitary forms (therefore, individuals are not immortal).

5. Philosophy and theology are contradictory; all explanations of the world are to be naturalistic (not supernatural).

Rise of Latin Universities

- Bologna, ca. 1088 — law
- Paris, ca. 1100 — theology

Political Situation in Western Europe

Role in Political & Religious Institutions

Method of Disputation

- Oral Debate
- Objection
- Response

Some Latin Philosophers

Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109)

Peter Abelard (1079-1142)

William of Auvergne (c. 1180-1249)

Robert Grosseteste (1170-1253)

Bonaventure (1221-1274)

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274)

Aquinas

Reason is a way to know God:

God can be known through His effects.

"Five Ways" of demonstrating God:

1. **From motion**

2. **From efficient causation**

3. **From possibility and necessity**

4. **From degrees of perfection**

5. **From purpose**

A Rationalist Definition of God:

God is perfect in every way.
In particular, God:

(1) exists necessarily,

(2) is eternal,

(3) is immutable (unchanging),

(4) is omnipotent (all-powerful),

(5) is omniscient (all-knowing), and

(6) is omnibenevolent (perfectly good).