AL-FĀRĀBĪ'S *KITĀB AL-ḤURŪF* AND HIS ANALYSIS OF THE SENSES OF BEING

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Abstract: Al-Fārābī, in the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, is apparently the first person to maintain that existence, in one of its senses, is a second-order concept [*ma'qūl thānī*]. As he interprets *Metaphysics* Δ7, ''being'' [*mawjūd*] has two meanings, second-order ''being as truth'' (including existence as well as propositional truth), and first-order ''being as divided into the categories.'' The paronymous form of the Arabic word ''*mawjūd*'' suggests that things exist through some existence [*wujūd*] distinct from their essences: for al-Kindī, God is such a *wujūd* of all things. Against this, al-Fārābī argues that existence as divided into the categories is real but identical with the essence of the existing thing, and that existence as truth is extrinsic to the essence but non-real (being merely the fact that some concept is instantiated). The *Ḥurūf* tries to reconstruct the logical syntax of syncategorematic or transcendental concepts such as being, which are often expressed in misleading grammatical forms. Al-Fārābī thinks that Greek more appropriately expressed many such concepts, including being, by particles rather than nouns or verbs; he takes *Metaphysics* Δ to be discussing the meanings of such particles (comparable to the logical constants of an ideal language), and he takes these concepts to demarcate the domain of metaphysics. This explains how al-Fārābī's title can mean both ''Book of Particles'' and ''Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.''

Résumé: Al-Fārābī, dans le *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, semble être le premier philosophe à soutenir que l'existence, en l'un de ses sens, est un concept de second ordre (*ma'qūl thānī*). Selon son interprétation de *Métaphysique* Δ7, ''être'' (*mawjūd*) a deux significations, l'une, l'''être comme vrai'' (qui inclut à la fois existence et vérité propositionnelle), de second ordre, l'autre, l'''être en tant que divisé selon les catégories'', de premier ordre. La forme paronymique du terme arabe ''*mawjūd*'' suggère que les choses existent par une certaine existence (*wujūd*) distincte de leur essence: pour al-Kindī, Dieu est ce *wujūd* de toutes les choses. À rebours, al-Fārābī soutient que l'existence en tant que divisée selon les catégories est réelle, mais

identique à l'essence de la chose existante, tandis que l'existence comme vrai, si elle est extrinsèque à l'essence, est toutefois non-réelle (puisqu'elle revient simplement au fait que quelque concept soit instancié). Le *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* s'efforce de reconstruire la syntaxe logique des concepts syncatégorématiques ou transcendantaux tels que l'être, souvent exprimés sous des formes grammaticales fourvoyantes. Al-Fārābī considère que, de manière plus appropriée, le grec exprimait de tels concepts, y compris l'être, au moyen de particules plutôt que de noms ou de verbes; il tient *Métaphysique* Δ pour une discussion de la signification de telles particules (comparables aux constantes logiques d'un langage idéal) et ces concepts pour assurant la délimitation du domaine de la métaphysique. Cela explique qu'on puisse entendre, sous le titre choisi par al-Fārābī, aussi bien ''Livre des Particules'' que ''*Métaphysique* d'Aristote''.

I. THE PROGRAM OF THE *KITĀB AL-ḤURŪF*

Almost forty years after its publication, Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* remains an intriguing puzzle.[2] It has not been integrated into general accounts of the history of Arabic philosophy, let alone philosophy more broadly, and while the work has been studied from various aspects, its overall aims and achievement have not really been clarified. I am writing a monograph which I hope will help situate the *Ḥurūf* within Fārābī's philosophical work and in its broader context, but I want here, abstracting from much scholarly detail about the text and about its relations to Fārābī's other works and to earlier and later writers, to try to extract what seems to me to be one fundamental point that Fārābī is making, which seems not to have been mentioned in the scholarship, and which I think can give us a new focus in reading the text. The *Ḥurūf* is an extraordinarily difficult work to classify – some of it is talking about the categories, some about the origin of language, some about the relations between philosophy and religion, some about the kinds of questions asked in science and the other ''syllogistic arts,'' and Fārābī never makes explicit what these discussions have to do with each other – and different scholars have approached it starting from these different particular discussions. The majority of the scholarship has concentrated on the discussions of language and of philosophy and religion in Part Two. Other scholars have concentrated on the accounts of the categories and of the scope of logic in Part One, connecting them with Fārābī's writings related to the *Organon*, notably his commentary on the *De Interpretatione*.[3] But some of the central concerns

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[2] I cite the first and only edition, Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī, *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut, 1969; the copyright date is given as 1970; there is an unaltered 1990 reprint). I will cite it by Mahdi's part and paragraph numbers (e.g. ''I,89''), followed by page and line numbers if I am quoting specific lines. I will cite Mahdi's (Arabic) introduction by ''Mahdi'' and page number.

[3] Besides some discussion in Zimmermann (*Al-Farabi's Commentary and Short Treatise*) and in Philippe Vallat, *Farabi et l'école d'Alexandrie* (Paris, 2004), see in this direction Shukri Abed, *Aristotelian Logic and the Arabic Language in Alfārābī* (Albany, 1991) and Stéphane Diebler, ''Catégories, conversation et philosophie chez al-Fārābī,'' in O. Bruun

of the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, although they might be called logical in a broad sense, belong squarely to metaphysics: they deal, in particular, with the concept of being, which Fārābī in *On the Aims of the Metaphysics* describes as the subject [*mawḍū'*] of first philosophy. Indeed, I will try to show how Fārābī might have understood the *Ḥurūf* as a whole as a contribution to metaphysics, and as restating in a new context some of the central contributions of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (and I will say a little about what the new context might be, that would make such a restatement necessary); and so thinking through Fārābī's project in the *Ḥurūf* should also shed some light on how he read the *Metaphysics*. Certainly Fārābī's approach to metaphysical topics in the *Ḥurūf* is heavily linguistic, beginning from the terms used to signify metaphysical concepts, and distinguishing their different meanings. But he has good reasons for adopting this approach in order to overcome what he sees as deep-seated metaphysical confusions, and to disentangle the logical syntax of the concepts. It is here, and in particular with the logical syntax of the concept of being, that the *Ḥurūf* makes what seems to me its most distinctive contribution.

Fārābī is apparently the first person ever to have said that the concept of existence, at least in one basic sense of existence, is a second-order concept, that is, a concept that applies to concepts rather than directly to objects – an insight most often credited to Frege.[4] Furthermore, Fārābī, like Frege and Russell, works out this idea in the context of imagining a logically ideal language, *i.e.* a language in which the grammatical form of our expressions would make perspicuous the logical form of the judgments they express, or at least in imagining a language that would correct discrepancies between grammatical and logical form that arise in the particular natural language in which he is writing. Still further: Fārābī's chief interest is not in the ordinary subject- and predicate-terms (what Frege would call object-words and concept-words) of a logically ideal language, but rather in what we would now call the logical constants

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and L. Corti (eds.), *Les catégories et leur histoire* (Paris, 2005), pp. 275–305; see now also Thérèse-Anne Druart, ''Al-Fārābī, the Categories, Metaphysics, and the *Book of Letters*,'' forthcoming in *Medioevo*, 33 (2007).

[4] Nicholas Rescher many years ago (''A ninth-century Arabic logician on: Is existence a predicate?'', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 21 [1960]: 428–30) called attention to Fārābī's interest in the logical structure of assertions of existence. Unfortunately, this was before the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* was published, and Rescher had at his disposal only the very abbreviated and not very deep discussion in Fārābī's *Risāla fī jawāb masā'il su'ila 'anhā* (ed. F. Dieterici in *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen* [Leiden, 1890], pp. 84–103), #16 (p. 90), which we can in retrospect see to be a quick summary of a point developed at length in the *Ḥurūf*. Also unfortunately Rescher followed Goichon in attributing the spurious *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, and thus an Avicennian essence-existence distinction, to Fārābī. Nonetheless, Rescher deserves credit for scenting that there was something important going on on this issue in Fārābī, and that it somehow grew out of *Posterior Analytics* II; on which more below.

of the language, or in the concepts that would be signified in a logically ideal language by such logical constants, including the concept of existence. Indeed, Fārābī seems to demarcate metaphysics precisely as dealing with those concepts that would be signified in a logically ideal language by logical constants. He seems to have been the first person to have taken anything remotely like this approach to metaphysics. Nonetheless, Fārābī does not see himself as an innovator, but as a transmitter of Greek scientific philosophy to the Arabic-speaking Muslim world. He sees the investigation of logical syntax, and of logical constants, as an Aristotelian program, and he works out his account of existence, in particular, in trying to restate what he thinks are basic insights of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* that have been overlooked by his own Arabic-speaking contemporaries; it is in attempting to reconstruct the syntax of Aristotle's Greek that he is led to describe how different kinds of judgments of being would be expressed in an ideal language, or in something closer to the ideal than Arabic. This is a very peculiar way of reading Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, but it is one that made sense in Fārābī's context, and that allowed him to make important philosophical progress. In my monograph I will try to locate the *Ḥurūf* both within Fārābī's larger project and within the reception-history of the *Metaphysics*. Here I want to say just enough about the overall structure of the *Ḥurūf* and about its relationship to the *Metaphysics* to locate Fārābī's account of being within the particular project of the *Ḥurūf*; I will then turn to his analysis of the senses of being, concentrating on the senses of existence (that is, of 1-place being, expressed in sentences of the form ''X is'' rather than ''S is P''), showing how he reconstructs an Aristotelian doctrine of being from (above all) *Metaphysics* Δ7 and *Posterior Analytics* II, and what he thinks its main lessons are. In particular, I will try to bring out the place of the second-order concept of existence among the different senses of being that Fārābī recognizes, and the reasons why he thinks it was important for Aristotle, and is even more important in Fārābī's own time and place, to distinguish such a second-order sense.

The idea that the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* stands in some special relationship to Aristotle's *Metaphysics* is certainly not new. Mahdi in his (heroic) *editio princeps* added to the title ''Alfarabi's Book of Letters'' the subtitle ''Commentary on Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.'' Now the *Ḥurūf* is not in any straightforward sense a commentary on anything, and Mahdi weakened his case by supporting it on an argument from exclusion (the *Ḥurūf* devotes considerable energy to the categories, Aristotle discusses the categories in the *Categories* and the *Metaphysics*, the *Ḥurūf* is not a commentary on the *Categories*, therefore it is a commentary on the *Metaphysics*, Mahdi pp. 30–4). Nonetheless, given that Fārābī himself refers to Aristotle's

Metaphysics, in *On the Aims of the Metaphysics*, as ''*al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-al-ḥurūf*,'' the book known by letters (because of the letter-names of the individual books), it seems very unlikely that he himself would write a *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* without intending to refer to Aristotle's treatise.[5] And that there is at least some overlap in contents with the *Metaphysics* (described in more detail below) is obvious on inspection. While his text is not a commentary on the *Metaphysics*, it is a reasonable conjecture that Fārābī sees it as restating what he takes to be the main scientific contributions of *Metaphysics*, that his treatise will do for his Arabic-speaking Muslim audience what Aristotle's *Metaphysics* originally did for its original Greek audience.[6] I think this conjecture is in fact correct, but it has to overcome some obvious difficulties. The most obvious difficulty is that the three Parts [*abwāb*] into which Mahdi (following the major breaks in the text) has divided the treatise do not at first sight seem to have much to do either with each other or with the *Metaphysics*; and, worse, the contents of two of these parts suggest an entirely different interpretation of the phrase ''*kitāb al-ḥurūf*.''

I'll try to set out the difficulty by sketching the topics of the different parts, starting with Part Two, which has so far received the lion's share of the attention. That part is an account of the rise of demonstrative science within a given linguistic and religious community, placed in the context of a schematic history of the development of all the arts in such a community, concentrating on what Fārābī calls the ''syllogistic arts,'' that is, arts whose exercise depends essentially on reasoning, such as rhetoric, dialectic, sophistic, and demonstrative science. Fārābī is especially interested in the *language* of these arts, and especially of demonstrative science. He talks about the origin of language as such; but language as it naturally arises is not well suited to being the vehicle of demonstrative science, because it is chiefly devoted to naming and describing the objects of immediate practical interest to human beings, which are not the main objects of theoretical interest. But natural language

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[5] The passage from *On the Aims of the Metaphysics* is in Dieterici, *Alfārābī's Philosophische Abhandlungen*, p. 34. Mahdi pp. 34–7 discusses the different witnesses to the title, which show minor variations, and sometimes conflate the book with the *Kitāb al-Alfāẓ*. The manuscript itself has no title at the beginning, and says at the end ''this is the end of Abū Naṣr al-Fārābī's *Risālat al-Ḥurūf*'' (III,251, p. 226,21). Fārābī's *On the Aims* is itself in one manuscript given the same title, *Risālat al-Ḥurūf* (see Mahdi p. 36). Ibn al-Nadīm's *Fihrist* ([Cairo, 1929], p. 352) cites Aristotle's *Metaphysics* as *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, adding that it is ordered according to the order of the *ḥurūf* (*i.e.* letters of the alphabet) of the Greeks, and refers to the individual books as *ḥurūf*.

[6] By contrast with the *On the Aims of the Metaphysics*, a much shorter and much easier book which is *about* Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (as the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* is not), and much of which does not *resemble* the *Metaphysics* at all – notably in containing very little argument, little even of doctrinal statement, mostly just indications of topic. However, the first part of *On the Aims* might be described as Fārābī's reworking of a small part of the *Metaphysics*, namely the meta-metaphysical chapter E1.

can be extended in two main ways to provide the terminology of the syllogistic arts. First, terms of ordinary language can be extended metaphorically to new meanings, and can then be frozen for use as technical terms; and this process of metaphorical extension and freezing can be repeated *ad libitum*. Second, new terms can be formed from old ones by regular grammatical processes of morphological derivation, and again, this type of extension can be repeated and combined with the first type.

Besides discussing the development of their arts and their language within a single community, Fārābī also discusses the transmission of the syllogistic arts, especially demonstrative science, across linguistic and religious boundaries. Most of the scholarly attention has gone to his discussion of transmission across religious boundaries. Religion for Fārābī is a kind of imitation or practical enactment of a philosophy (either a demonstrative philosophy or one resting on sub-demonstrative reasoning); and difficulties will arise notably when demonstrative philosophy is transmitted into an already constituted religious community, whose adherents may be reluctant to admit that their religious claims as merely imitations of conclusions of demonstrative philosophy, and so they may resist the importation of philosophy. But Fārābī is at least equally interested in problems of transmission across linguistic boundaries. Suppose you are translating a scientific text into a language that does not already have a technical vocabulary. In translating the technical terms of the source text, derived from the metaphorical extension and technical freezing of words in the source-language, you will be confronted with a choice whether to create a technical vocabulary in the target-language by imitating the metaphors of the source-language in the target-language, where they may be much less natural, or whether instead to create a new technical vocabulary out of metaphors which are more natural to the target language; either way, there is a risk of misunderstanding. Fārābī talks about these problems in general, but also makes it clear that he is especially concerned with the transmission of demonstrative philosophy and its vocabulary from Greek into (Syriac and thus) Arabic.

Thus far Part Two. This does not sound much like anything in the *Metaphysics*, although it might vaguely recall the account of the rise of theoretical science in *Metaphysics* A1–2 (but it is not clear that Fārābī knew these chapters, which are missing in the extant Arabic translations of the *Metaphysics*).[7] Parts One and Three seem very

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[7] On the complicated history of the different Arabic translations of different books of the *Metaphysics*, see Amos Bertolacci, ''On the Arabic translations of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*,'' *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy*, 15 (2005): 241–75, and the studies Bertolacci cites (including, on A, earlier work of Bertolacci and of Cecilia Martini). When I cite the *Metaphysics* in Arabic, I will refer to the lemmata in Averroes, *Tafsīr Mā Baʿd aṭ-Ṭabīʿat*, ed. M. Bouyges, 4 vols. (Beirut, 1938–52).

different from Part Two (although not so different from each other). These parts are organized around lists of (allegedly) equivocal terms: in each case Fārābī lists the different meanings of the term, starting with an ordinary-language meaning and then explains how it is metaphorically extended to a series of further meanings, especially technical meanings in the different arts and especially in philosophy. The terms treated in Part One include many of the names of the categories, or interrogative particles from which names of categories are derived, such as ''*kam*'' = ''how much?'' and ''*kayfa*'' = ''how?'' or ''*qualis*?''; he also discusses such terms as ''being,'' ''essence,'' ''accident,'' ''from,'' and ''because.'' Part Three applies the same method to consider the different kinds of scientific question or investigation described in *Posterior Analytics* II, whether it is, what it is, that it is, why it is; in each case Fārābī distinguishes different meanings of ''whether'' or ''what'' or ''that'' or ''why,'' and, in particular, different meanings that they have in different syllogistic arts. Clearly if Parts One and Three of the *Ḥurūf* resemble any part of the *Metaphysics*, it is Δ, and indeed there is heavy overlap between the lists of equivocal terms investigated in *Ḥurūf* Part One and in Δ.

Kitāb al-Ḥurūf Part One also discusses the relations between primitive terms (''terms of first imposition'') and the terms derived or ''paronymous'' [*mushtaqq*] from them. A proper noun like ''Socrates,'' a common noun like ''horse,'' and also an abstract accidental term like ''whiteness'' are all primitive terms; by contrast, the concrete accidental term ''white'' is paronymous or derived from ''whiteness,'' not necessarily in the sense that it arises later in the history of the language than ''whiteness'' (although this is more plausible in Arabic than it is in the English example), but in the sense that something is called white *because* there is whiteness in it. While Aristotle applies this distinction between paronymous and non-paronymous terms only to nouns, Fārābī thinks that all verbs (by which, as is standard in Arabic grammar, he means *finite* verbs) are paronymous from their *maṣdar*s (a *maṣdar* is a *nomen actionis*, comparable to a Greek infinitive but handled morphologically and syntactically like any other noun). The grammatical form of a paronymous term suggests that something is X by having an X-ness present in it (or V's by having an action of V-ing in it). But Fārābī seems particularly interested in cases where the grammatical form of a term misleadingly fails to track its logical form, the cases that, according to Aristotle's *On Sophistical Refutations*, can give rise to sophisms of σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως – usually translated ''sophisms of figure of speech,'' but it might be better to say ''sophisms of grammatical form,'' *i.e.* sophisms which arise because the

grammatical form of an expression fails to correspond to its logical form, and which can be solved only by diagnosing this discrepancy.[8]

Given this sketch of what Fārābī does in the three parts of the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, we can begin to see how the three parts might fit together, and what they might have to do with the *Metaphysics*, specifically with *Metaphysics* Δ. The parts do not seem to fit in the transmitted order One-Two-Three; rather, Part Two reads as prolegomena to Parts One and Three.[9] Part Two shows us that technical vocabulary arises from a series of metaphorical extensions (and morphological derivations); the same term can have meanings in different arts that differ from each other and from its ordinary-language meanings (or from the meanings of its ordinary-language cognates, since it may not itself occur in ordinary language). Confusions are thus likely to arise. Aristotle found it necessary to write Δ for his students or for the readers of his other works, to avoid misunderstanding of his scientific vocabulary by distinguishing the different meanings of each term and explaining how the scientific meanings have arisen from more ordinary meanings; and it is that much more necessary for Fārābī to do something similar, since the

[8] On the appearances created by the grammatical form of paronymous expressions, and instances in which they may mislead, see notably *Ḥurūf* I,20–21, I,26, I,36 and I,84; the last-mentioned text is discussed below. Aristotle discusses sophisms of σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως in *On Sophistical Refutations* 4, 166b10–19, and at length in chapter 22. *Categories* 5, 3b13–16 says that species- and genus-terms like ''man'' and animal ''seem in accordance with the σχῆμα τῆς προσηγορίας'' to signify some *this*, but in fact do not; comparison with the *Sophistical Refutations* texts makes it clear that he means their grammatical resemblance to proper nouns gives rise to fallacies of σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως, some of which he discusses in *Sophistical Refutations* 22. Fārābī is here picking up on an important Aristotelian theme, although developing it in new directions. On Fārābī and Aristotle on paronymy, see especially the important discussion in Zimmermann pp. xxiv–xli. Zimmermann also discusses ways in which Fārābī draws on the grammatical tradition, and considerations that may have made Fārābī more likely than Aristotle to believe that paronymous terms are actually derived from earlier non-paronymous terms. (At p. xxxvii n. 3, commenting on our *Categories* passage on how we can be misled by the grammatical form of ''man,'' Zimmermann says, ''The shapes of words can of course only be held to be misleading in particular cases if they are held to be significant in general; though I fail to see how the shapes of Greek nouns can be supposed to be significant in general. There is no way of telling that, say, ἄνθρωπος is a substantive and λευκός an adjective short of knowing what these words *mean*.'' But Aristotle is thinking of the fact that a common substantive term such as ἄνθρωπος, like a proper noun and unlike adjectives such as λευκός, is not inflected for gender and so never becomes paronymous. The word λευκόν, which Aristotle takes to be the basic non-paronymous form, becomes paronymously λευκός or λευκή when said of a masculine or feminine subject [and homonymously λευκόν when said of a concrete neuter subject], as μουσική, which he takes to be the basic non-paronymous form, becomes paronymously μουσικός or μουσικόν when said of a masculine or neuter subject [and homonymously μουσική when said of a concrete feminine subject]; but a woman is ἄνθρωπος, not ἀνθρώπη. On all this see my ''Metaphysics, dialectic, and the *Categories*,'' *Revue de Métaphysique et de Morale*, 100 [1995]: 311–37.)

[9] On the order of the parts, see Mahdi's discussion, pp. 40–3. The transmitted beginning of Part One is fragmentary; Mahdi suggests that what is now Part One fell out of some ancestor of the extant manuscript, and that what survived of it was put back in the wrong place. Mahdi conjectures that the original order may have been Two-Three-One; I think Two-One-Three is more likely.

transmission of technical vocabulary from Greek into Arabic has created even more opportunities for confusion.

I think this is indeed how Fārābī is thinking, but it is not a full solution. On this account it seems that Δ and the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* would be carrying out a rather elementary and propaedeutic task of philosophical education; and they would seem to have no more connection with metaphysics than with any other branch of philosophy or science. Furthermore, this account fails to explain a fundamental fact about the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, namely that the majority of the terms discussed in Parts One and Three are grammatically particles, rather than nouns or verbs. ''*Ḥurūf*'' (sg. *ḥarf*), besides meaning ''letters,'' can also mean grammatical ''particles,'' where this has to be taken in a somewhat broader sense than is customary in Greek grammar, to mean any word that can neither be declined like a noun nor conjugated like a verb, covering a range of short uninflected words, pronouns and prepositions and adverbs and conjunctions and the like (Fārābī describes *ḥurūf* in this sense in his *Kitāb al-Alfāẓ*).[10] It seems very unlikely to be a coincidence that most of Parts One and Three of the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* are about *ḥurūf* in this sense. But how can the same book be *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* both in the sense of filling the role of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*, and in the sense of being about grammatical particles? Is this just a bizarre pun?

To see what is going on, we need to say something about Fārābī's attitude toward Greek philosophy. Fārābī is unusual among medieval philosophers in being interested in Greek philosophy not just as a doctrine or as a discipline that he can practice, but as a historical artifact. He is very interested in who the Greek philosophers were, in who they were writing for and why and under what political and religious circumstances, and in how their writing follows the contours of the Greek language. He does not trust Greek philosophy as it is presented to him by the Arabic translation-literature, and is constantly trying to second-guess the translators and to reconstruct what lies behind the veil of the translations. Unfortunately, he has very little evidence to go on. His comments on the Greek language in the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* make it all too plain that he did not know Greek. His evidence about the language seems to come from metalinguistic remarks in the translated texts (whether of Aristotle or of later writers, some of them drawing on the Greek grammatical tradition), from scattered comments by Arabic writers or personal acquaintances (probably Christians with at least fragmentary knowledge of Greek as a sacred tongue), and from his own

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[10] There is an elaborate classification of *ḥurūf*, *Kitāb al-Alfāẓ al-mustaʿmala fī al-manṭiq*, ed. Muhsin Mahdi (Beirut, 1968), pp. 42–56: pronouns, articles, prepositions, ''adverbs'' [*ḥawāshī* – the most interesting class, including most of the *ḥurūf* discussed in the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, with many subspecies] and conjunctions.

reconstruction of the difficulties that the translators must have faced. Now Fārābī, as we have seen, is very concerned with cases where the grammatical form of an expression misleadingly fails to correspond to its logical form, leading to the danger of sophisms of σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως. When a language is stretched beyond its usual expressive capacities such discrepancies are likely to occur, and the Arabic translations of Greek philosophical texts, and the Arabic philosophical texts written in imitation of the language of the translations, are full of such awkward and potentially misleading expressions. Fārābī, applying a methodological principle of charity, seems to assume that in each case the Greek original was free of such infelicities. This means that, in practice, his reconstructed Greek serves as an ideal logical language, *i.e.* a language in which grammatical form always tracks logical form. (He is not theoretically committed to the view that Greek is an ideal logical language, and would deny it if asked, but this is what he assumes in practice.) Now, where grammatical form tracks logical form, a non-paronymous noun will signify either a substance or a being in some accidental category, and a paronymous noun or a verb will signify that such a being is present in or attributed to some underlying subject. But metaphysics, as Fārābī understands it, isn't about things in the categories (*Ḥurūf* I,11–17); it's about the categories themselves (especially substance) and about syncategorematic or transcendental concepts such as being, unity, essence, cause, and also God (who also, for Fārābī, does not fall under any category).[11] And, where grammatical form tracks logical form, these concepts would be signified, not by non-paronymous nouns, not by paronymous nouns or verbs, but by particles. Particles in an ideal logical language thus correspond roughly to what we would call logical constants. And it is clear that Fārābī thinks that at least some important metaphysical notions were expressed in Greek by particles (or by terms morphologically derived from particles). Most strikingly, the fragmentarily transmitted beginning of *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part One says that the words ''*un*'' and ''*ūn*'' in Greek were particles of affirmation, comparable to ''*inna*'' in Arabic (thus something like a Fregean assertion-stroke), with ''*ūn*'' more strongly emphatic, and that the Greeks use ''*ūn*'' to signify God by contrast with all other beings, which they call rather ''*un*'' (I,1, p. 61,10-13). (This is presumably a

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[11] *On the Aims* stresses the non-material character of the objects of metaphysics (non-material either by being separate immaterial substances, or by being universal attributes which apply both to material and to immaterial things), the *Ḥurūf* their non-categorial character. But this is not as great a difference as it might seem, since for the *Ḥurūf* ''each of the categories [*i.e.* anything in any of the categories] . . . is predicated of some sensible [and thus material] τόδε τι'' (I,6, p. 64,2–4). Diebler and Vallat seem to me to exaggerate the extent to which the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* is about categories; its interest in the categories points to what is beyond them.

distorted account of the words ὄν and ὤν, nominative singular neuter and masculine of the participle of the verb "to be"; it is perfectly true that Christians refer to God as ὁ ὤν, "he who is," following Exodus 3:14 ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὤν, although the form ὤν is not peculiar to God and neither ὄν nor ὤν is a particle of affirmation. Fārābī probably did not know any languages that distinguish a masculine from a neuter gender, so this explanation of the difference is unlikely to have occurred to him.)

    More generally, it seems likely that Fārābī thought that the Greek original of *Metaphysics* Δ was devoted specifically to distinguishing the many meanings of particles, rather than of nouns or verbs; this would explain why Parts One and Three of the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, whose function corresponds to that of Δ as he understood it, also concentrate on particles. But it is important to draw a distinction. Fārābī is very unlikely to have thought that every lexical item that heads a chapter of Δ was a particle; he surely knew that, for instance, the Greek word for "cause" (heading Δ2) was a noun, and indeed some of the lexical items heading sections of *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part One (such as "*jawhar*" = "substance" and " *'araḍ*" = accident) are also nouns.[12] However, in such cases, he is likely to have thought that the many meanings of the noun in question track the many meanings of some particle, whether the noun is morphologically derived from the particle or not. And in at least some cases this is in fact correct. Thus the many meanings of "cause" discussed in Δ2 correspond to different meanings of διά + accusative, "because" [= *lima*], which is certainly a particle for Fārābī or for the Arab grammarians (the correspondence between senses of "cause" [*sabab*] and "because" [*lima*] is made explicit at *Physics* II,7 198a14–16).[13] Presumably also the different meanings of οὐσία [= *jawhar*] in Δ8 correspond to different meanings of the question τί ἐστι, "what is it?", and while "τί" in Greek is declinable, the Arabic equivalent "*mā*" is an uninflected particle. In fact, peering through the veil of the translations, Fārābī would have had good inductive reason to believe that every chapter of Δ was about the many meanings of some particle. Thus besides Δ8 on οὐσία, the chapters Δ13 and Δ14 on the categories of quantity and quality are headed by terms derived from interrogatives which in Arabic are indeclinable particles [Δ13, ποσόν, becomes *kamiyya*; Δ14, headed by ποιόν but switching to ποιότης, becomes *kayfiyya*]. Other chapters are even more explicit about particles,

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[12] The full list of nouns treated is: *jawhar* = substance, *'araḍ* = accident, *nisba* and *iḍāfa* ("relation" in a wider and a narrower sense), *dhāt* = essence, *shay'* = thing, *mawjūd* = being.

[13] The Arabic of this passage is at Arisṭūṭālīs, *Al-Ṭabī'a*, ed. 'Abdurraḥmān Badawī, 2 vols. (Cairo, 1964–5), vol. 1, p. 136. *Metaphysics* Δ2 also discusses the *final* cause under the heads of ἕνεκα = *min ajli* and ἵνα = *li*-with-subjunctive (1013a32–b3). Fārābī discusses *min ajli* in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* I,106.

Δ18 about κατά + accusative [= *bi-dhāt* or *li-dhāt*], Δ24 about ἐκ [= *min*]; Δ23 is about ἔχειν but says in its last sentence (1023a23–5) that the meanings of ἔχειν correspond to those of ἔν τινι εἶναι, and the Arabic, lacking a verb for ''have,'' makes the whole chapter about the meanings of the preposition *li-* (corresponding roughly to the Greek dative), with the final sentence saying that the meanings of *li-* and of *fī* [= ἐν] correspond.[14] Δ11 is on prior and posterior, which become particles in the Arabic, *qabla* [= πρότερον] and *ba'da* [= ὕστερον]. Furthermore, Δ1 implies that the senses of ἀρχή correspond to those of ὅθεν = *minhu*; Δ22 1022b32–3 says that privation is said in as many ways as the α-privative, which becomes a separate particle in the Arabic (Bouyges prints *bi-lā* but the text is uncertain); and while the Arabic of Δ15 takes as its header *muḍāf* in place of πρός τι, the text still uses the preposition *ilā* = πρός enough that a reader would probably conclude that the senses of *muḍāf* correspond to the senses of *ilā*.[15] Of course different languages will express different concepts by means of particles, and Fārābī would have reason to suspect that the Greek original uses particles, either for the header-term or for something whose meanings correspond to the meanings of the header-term, even in those cases where the Arabic translation does not; in any case, he thinks that these categorial (for Δ8, Δ13–15) and transcendental or syncategorematic concepts *should* be expressed by particles, and that, given the inevitable infelicities of the translation-process, the Greek original would have expressed them in this logically perspicuous way more often than the translation does.

From this perspective we can see why a discussion of the many meanings of the terms covered in Δ or in Parts One and Three of the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* would belong specifically to metaphysics, and also why the semantic discussion would not be merely an elementary propaedeutic. Each syncategorematic etc. term (each logical constant) has its own peculiar logical syntax, which we will be tempted to assimilate to the logical syntax of ordinary categorematic terms, thus engendering metaphysical confusions and sophisms of σχῆμα τῆς λέξεως, especially when the grammatical form of the term is that of an ordinary non-paronymous or paronymous noun. We will need to sort out these confusions and to disentangle the correct logical

[14] Averroes' commentary here (654,9–13) explicitly refers to *fī* and *li* or *lahu* as *ḥurūf*, and he takes this up again in his commentary on the beginning of Δ24 (657,2–5), which also refers to *min* = ἐκ, the subject of Δ24, as a *ḥarf*; noted already by Mahdi, p. 33. (Warning: the Arabic of this section of Averroes is lost, and was reconstructed by Bouyges from the Hebrew and Latin translations.)

[15] This conclusion would be further supported by the *Categories* chapter on *muḍāf* (*Manṭiq Arisṭū*, ed. 'Abdurraḥmān Badawī, 3 vols. [Cairo, 1948–52], vol. 1, pp. 48–54). Fārābī in *Ḥurūf* I,370–55 has a complicated and interesting discussion of *nisba* (relation in a broad sense) and *iḍāfa* (specifically the *category* of relation), again closely connected with the meanings of different particles, which I will discuss in the monograph.

syntax, not only in teaching our freshmen, but also in guarding ourselves against persistent temptations of thought, and in replying to eminent past and contemporary philosophers. Fārābī would see himself as modeling himself here on Aristotle's corrections of the confusions of earlier Greek philosophers, perhaps Plato or (if Fārābī cannot accept the possibility of conflict between Aristotle and Plato) at any rate Parmenides;[16] Fārābī will aim a similar critique at earlier Arabic writers.[17]

II. EXPRESSIONS FOR BEING IN GREEK AND ARABIC

However, the single most important term for Fārābī's project in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part One, and surely also in *Metaphysics* Δ, is ''being'' [*mawjūd*]. What does this have to do with particles? One answer can be taken from the discussion in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part Three of the question from *Posterior Analytics* II εἰ ἔστι = *hal mawjūdun*, which asks for the existence [*wujūd*] of a thing (III,228–49), the many

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[16] Whether Fārābī is willing to accept the possibility of conflict between Plato and Aristotle depends in part on the authenticity of the *Kitāb al-Jam' bayna ra'yay al-Ḥakīmayn*, which has been contested by Joep Lameer, *Al-Fārābī and Aristotelian Syllogistics* (Leiden, 1994), pp. 30–9. Here I leave both the authenticity issue, and the larger issue of Fārābī's evaluation of Plato, open.

[17] Amos Bertolacci (*per litteras*) suggests interpreting the title *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* simply as ''book of particles,'' and not taking the treatise as a whole as standing in any special relation to the *Metaphysics*, although he grants the undeniable relation between *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part One and *Metaphysics* Δ. It will be clear that I agree that the title means, among other things, ''book of particles.'' But, as noted above, it seems very unlikely that Fārābī would have used this phrase without intending a reference to the *Metaphysics* as well; and it should now be clear why that a book on particles, treated the way that the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* treats them, would stand in a special relation to metaphysics, and indeed to the *Metaphysics*, read in a way that makes Δ central. The *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* (by contrast with the *Kitāb al-Alfāẓ*) is concerned not primarily with the particles as expressions (and not with particles in any one language) but rather with what they signify, and it is interested mainly in their scientific and specifically metaphysical significata. This brings it close to *Metaphysics* Δ, whose aim, according to Fārābī in *On the Aims of the Metaphysics*, is the ''differentiation of what is signified by each of the expressions that signify the subject-matters of this science and the species and attributes of its subjects'' (Dieterici, p. 35) – thus it is not about the expressions (particles for the *Ḥurūf*, their grammatical form unspecified here) but about their significata, and specifically about those that fall under ''*this* science,'' *i.e.* metaphysics. But the relation of the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* to the *Metaphysics* is not *simply* to Δ: when Fārābī interprets and reworks Δ in the *Ḥurūf*, he reads Δ very much as part of the larger *Metaphysics*, and the *Ḥurūf* also has sections corresponding to parts of the *Metaphysics* beyond Δ, including (as we will see below) Z17, which draws on the *Posterior Analytics* to provide a crucial clarification about substance. Many of the particles discussed in the *Ḥurūf* have both a logical sense, signifying a second intention, and a ''real'' scientific sense; the scientific sense will be specifically metaphysical (because extra-categorial – both the logical sense and the metaphysical sense will fall outside the categories, but for opposite reasons), and the main interest of the *Ḥurūf* will be in the metaphysical sense, describing the logical sense chiefly to ward off conflations between it and the metaphysical sense. We will see below how this works in the crucial case of expressions for being. There are of course some particles which have only logical senses, such as ''and,'' and the *Ḥurūf* (unlike the *Alfāẓ*) generally does not bother to mention these expressions at all.

meanings of the question *hal mawjūdun* may be taken either as many
meanings of *mawjūd* or as many meanings of the particle *hal*, and we
can say that the meanings of *mawjūd* track the meanings of *hal*, in
the same way that the meanings of ''cause'' track those of ''because.''
(''There are some particles that, when they are connected with a
thing, signify that what is sought is the knowledge of its *wujūd*, not
the knowledge of its quantity or time or place, like our saying '*hal*,' ''
Kitāb al-Alfāẓ p. 47,13–14.) However, there is another and more
direct connection between being and particles. Fārābī thinks that
the Greek word for ''being,'' which is pronounced something like
''*astīn*'' and is at least sometimes translated into Arabic as ''*maw-
jūd*,'' is a particle – at any rate, he says that it is not a verb, his
description of its functions seems to imply that it cannot be a noun
either, and the only remaining option is that it is a particle. This
may seem strange, and it needs some qualification and some
context-setting.

Fārābī thinks that Greek has several words that express being. In
particular, it has past-tense and future-tense copulas, corresponding
roughly to Arabic ''*kāna*'' and ''*yakūnu*,'' and these are of course
verbs. However, ''in all the other languages [*i.e.* other than Arabic],
such as Persian and Syriac and Sogdian, there is an expression
[*lafẓa*] which they use to signify all things without specifying one
thing as opposed to another thing [*i.e.* it is a 1-place predicate which
is true of any subject whatever], and they also use it to signify the
connection [*ribāṭ*] between the predicate [*khabar*] and what it is
predicated of: this is what connects the predicate [*maḥmūl*] with the
subject when the predicate is a noun or when they want the predicate
to be connected with the subject *simpliciter* without any mention of
time'' (I,82, p. 111,4–8): Fārābī assumes that this holds also in Greek.
By contrast, in Arabic, although the propositions ''X was Y'' and ''X
will be Y'' are most naturally expressed using the verbal copula
KWN, ''X *kāna* Y'' or ''X *yakūnu* Y,''[18] the present-tense or (more
precisely) tenseless proposition ''X is Y'' is most naturally expressed
simply by ''X Y,'' e.g. ''Socrates is wise'' = ''*Suqrāṭu ḥakīmun*,'' with
no verb or any other word to connect the subject-noun and the
predicate-noun. The only case where it is natural in a tenseless
sentence to use a third term to connect the subject-noun and the
predicate-noun is where the subject and predicate are both definite:
thus if I tried to express ''Socrates is the sage'' by ''*Suqrāṭu
al-ḥakīmu*,'' this would most naturally be understood not as the
sentence ''Socrates is the sage'' but as the noun phrase ''Socrates
the sage,'' ''the wise Socrates''; and so, to make it clear that I mean
the sentence, I use the ''pronoun of separation'' ''*huwa*'' or ''*hiya*,''

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[18] As we will see, Fārābī prefers a different and less natural way of expressing these
propositions in Arabic (see discussion in Zimmermann, pp. xliv–xlv and cxxxi–cxxxiv).

''*Suqrāṭu, huwa al-ḥakīmu*,'' literally ''Socrates, he the sage,'' *i.e.* ''Socrates, he is the sage,'' *i.e.* ''Socrates is the sage.'' So in a present-tense or (rather) tenseless sentence, either the copula is not expressed or it is expressed by a pronoun; there is no natural way to express the copula of such a sentence by a verb.

Here, for Fārābī, Arabic shows a mix of good and bad features, *i.e.* of ways in which the grammatical form of an expression corresponds to and reveals its logical form, and ways in which the grammatical form is misleading about the logical form. The distinction between tensed and tenseless propositions is of great logical importance, and it is a good thing that Arabic expresses this distinction grammatically. (It is good, in particular, that propositions asserting *essential* predicates, ''Socrates is [a] man'' or ''man is [an] animal,'' can be expressed without tense-marking: any tense-marker, even of the present tense, would suggest that the predicate might previously have failed to hold of the subject, or might cease to hold of the subject, and therefore that it is accidental and not essential to the subject.) Fārābī assumes that Greek must be at least as logically perspicuous as Arabic, and it never crosses his mind that Greek might have failed to express grammatically the distinction between tensed and tenseless propositions.[19] However, it is also logically important to express the copula (the copula-term is ''necessary in the theoretical sciences and in the art of logic,'' I,83 p. 112,3; one reason would be to distinguish the subject and predicate sides of an assertion, and to distinguish a subject-predicate sentence from a subject-attribute noun phrase), and Arabic is deficient in not usually expressing the copula in tenseless sentences. Fārābī assumes that Greek, like Persian and Sogdian, avoids this peculiar deficiency of Arabic: thus Greek will express both tensed and tenseless copulas, and will express them by different (although morphologically related) words. The tenseless copula, ''*hast*'' in Persian and ''*astī*'' in Sogdian, is in Greek something like ''*astīn*'' (I,82 p. 111,11). ''*Astīn*'' cannot be a verb, since as Aristotle says, ''a verb is what consignifies time, no part of it signifying separately'' (*De Interpretatione* 16b6–7). It also seems that it cannot be a noun, since if it is ungrammatical to predicate one noun of another by saying simply ''X Y,'' it will still be ungrammatical if I insert a third noun between them; if the copula is itself a noun, an infinite regress of nouns will be needed to connect the subject with the nominal predicate. Thus ''*astīn*'' must be a

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[19] In fact Greek, like Arabic, can use a ''nominal,'' *i.e.* verbless, sentence to express a predication without expressing any tense, e.g. ''ὁ Σωκράτης σοφός.'' However, in Greek it is plausible to suppose that this is merely an elliptical expression for ''ὁ Σωκράτης σοφός ἐστιν,'' whereas in Arabic this is impossible, both because the predicate complement of the copula-verb KWN is in the accusative while the predicate of a nominal sentence is in the nominative, and because the copula-verb must be either in the perfect, signifying the past, or in the imperfect, signifying the future.

particle.[20] For this reason, although ''*astīn*'' is a perfectly reasonable
Arabic rendering of ''ἔστιν'' and we might just retransliterate it as
''ἔστιν,'' I will continue to write it ''*astīn*,'' to distinguish the particle
in Fārābian ideal reconstructed Greek from the third-person singular
present indicative verb in historical classical Greek. Fārābī of course
grants that Greek will also have past-tense and future-tenses
copulas, which will consignify time and will therefore be verbs,
paronymous from ''*astīn*.''[21] And all of these words, ''*astīn*'' and the
verbs derived from it, will also have 1-place uses to express tensed
or tenseless existence. ''X *astīn*'' without a complement will mean
''X exists'' (not marked for tense), and in that sense ''*astīn*'' will
''signify all things without specifying one thing as opposed to
another thing.''

Fārābī says (I,83–66, pp. 112–15) that the translators have had a
difficult time with ''*astīn*,'' since there is no word in Arabic that does
exactly what ''*astīn*'' does in Greek. This crucial piece of meta-
physical vocabulary is thus an example of the kind of difficulties of
transmission described in Part Two (problems of discrepancy be-
tween grammatical and logical form will be involved, and more
surprisingly also problems of metaphor), which help to explain why
something like *Metaphysics* Δ is all the more necessary when philos-
ophy has been transmitted from one linguistic community to another,
and thus when its vocabulary has been through a process of trans-
lation. The translators (different translators, and presumably also
the same translators in different contexts) have chosen different
Arabic words to stand for ''*astīn*,'' each with some advantages and

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[20] With all this compare Fārābī's commentary on *De Interpretatione* 16b22–5, *Sharḥ
al-Fārābī li-Kitāb Arisṭūṭālīs fī al-ʿIbāra*, ed. Wilhelm Kutsch and Stanley Marrow (Beirut,
1960), pp. 43–8. There are a number of tensions between this work and the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*,
arising notably from Fārābī's lack of interest in metaphysical uses of *mawjūd* and related
terms in the context of the *De Interpretatione*. But here too Fārābī argues that terms such
as *mawjūd* or *astīn* or *un* cannot, as far as their logical form is concerned, be either strictly
nouns (on pain of a regress of copulas), or strictly verbs (because they do not consignify
time); he concludes that Aristotle here calls them verbs in an extended sense, as signifying
or consignifying subject-predicate connection although not time. Fārābī is much less
interested in particles here than in the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, and says that Aristotle is not
interested in particles in the *De Interpretatione* (48,5–7). Nonetheless, following things that
Aristotle says (in the here distorting Arabic translation) at 20a3–5 and 21b5–7, Fārābī
speaks of ''the particle *yūjadu*'' at 129,6 and ''the particle *wujūd*'' at 165,23 (although these
are of course not *grammatically* particles in Arabic, nor would *yūjadu* be a particle in any
language if taken strictly as tensed). I hope to come back to the comparison between the
Kitāb al-Ḥurūf and the *De Interpretatione* commentary in my monograph.
[21] On these ''hyparctic verbs'' [*kalim wujūdiyya*] in non-Arabic languages, comparable to
kāna and *yakūnu* in Arabic, see *Ḥurūf* I,82, and also *Sharḥ li-Kitāb Arisṭūṭālīs fī al-ʿIbāra*
46,13–20. But in the latter text *astīn* is paronymous from the basic infinitive [*maṣdar*] of the
hyparctic verbs, whereas the *Ḥurūf* text denies that it is paronymous or derived from any
maṣdar (presumably it is itself the *maṣdar* from which the hyparctic verbs are derived).
Perhaps in the *De Interpretatione* commentary the idea is that *astīn* is a tenseless but
paronymous participle, like *mawjūd*. Of course a language, even Greek, might work like
this grammatically, but if so, from the point of view of the *Ḥurūf*, it is failing to perfectly
reflect logical form.

disadvantages; and thus, although Fārābī does not say so explicitly, he must do some detective work to determine when it is in fact the same word ''*astīn*'' (or others morphologically derived from it) behind the different terms of the Arabic translations.

One strategy, which Fārābī himself generally follows, is to translate ''*astīn*'' and the verbs derived from it by words derived from the triliteral WJD, whose basic meaning is ''to find.'' When words from this root are used to express the concept of being, they are being metaphorically extended from their basic use in natural language; also they will not have the same relationships of morphological derivation as the corresponding Greek terms (in particular, ''*astīn*'' itself will be translated by a paronymous term), and presumably the grammatical relationships in Arabic will be more remote from the logical relationships than are the grammatical relationships in Greek. These are disadvantages of this strategy; the main advantage seems to be that it is possible to render the tensed and tenseless copulas by words from the same root, and also to make the same terms serve in both 1-place and 2-place uses. Thus for ''X was Y,'' instead of saying ''X *kāna* Y,'' we say ''X *wujida* Y,'' literally ''X has been found [to be] Y''; for ''X will be Y,'' instead of saying ''X *yakūnu* Y,'' we say ''X *yūjadu* Y,'' literally ''X will be found [to be] Y''; and for ''X is Y'' without any expression of tense, instead of saying simply ''X Y'' without a third term, we say ''X *mawjūdun* Y,'' literally ''X found[22] Y,'' *i.e.* ''X [is] found [to be] Y,'' *i.e.* ''X is Y.'' Likewise, and in much more natural Arabic, we can say ''X *wujida*,'' ''X has been found,'' for ''X was, *i.e.* existed [or was present, e.g. in a place]''; ''X *yūjadu*,'' ''X will be found,'' for ''X will be, *i.e.* will exist''; and ''X *mawjūdun*,'' ''X [is] found,'' for ''X is, *i.e.* exists'' without any expression of tense. The main disadvantage to this mode of expression that Fārābī notes is that ''*mawjūd*,'' used to translate ''*astīn*,'' is grammatically paronymous, and thus gives rise to the appearance that something is *mawjūd* through a *wujūd*, found through a finding or existent through an existence, just as things are white through a whiteness:

the expression ''*mawjūd*'' is, in its first imposition in Arabic, paronymous, and every paronymous term by its construction gives the impression that there is in what it signifies an implicit subject and, in this subject, the meaning [*ma'nā*] of the *maṣdar* from which [the term] was derived [*i.e.* as ''white'' implies, without explicitly mentioning, a subject in which whiteness is present]. For this reason the expression ''*mawjūd*'' has given the impression that there is in every thing a meaning / entity [*ma'nā*][23] in an

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[22] Where ''found'' is the passive participle of ''find,'' not the preterite active.
[23] Fārābī's use of ''*ma'nā*'' (literally ''meaning'') here is influenced by its use in *kalām* for ''entity,'' especially in contexts where the entity would be named by an abstract noun or *maṣdar*: thus I ask whether Zayd, or whether God, is living through a *ma'nā*, *i.e.* through some entity, life, which is present in him.

implicit subject, and that this meaning / entity is what is signified by the expression ''*wujūd*'': so it gave the impression that *wujūd* is in an implicit subject, and *wujūd* was understood as being like an accident in a subject. (I,84, p. 113,9–14)[24]

To avoid this misleading appearance, Fārābī says (I,86, pp. 114–15, and cp. I,83 p. 112,8–19), some of the translators preferred instead to translate *astīn* and its cognates by means of a vocabulary derived from the word ''*huwa*,'' not in its basic use as a pronoun meaning ''he,'' but in its use as a ''pronoun of separation'' serving as a copula in sentences like ''*Suqrāṭu, huwa al-ḥakīmu*,'' ''Socrates, he [is] the sage,'' *i.e.* ''Socrates is the sage.''[25] Indeed, in Δ7, which Fārābī thinks is about the many meanings of ''*astīn*'' (in fact Aristotle introduces the chapter by speaking about the ways in which τὸ ὄν is said, but then goes back and forth freely between meanings of ὄν and meanings of ἔστιν or εἶναι), the translator gives the heading as ''*huwiyya*,'' and then renders Aristotle's 2-place uses of ἔστιν and εἶναι sometimes by ''*huwa*,'' sometimes by ''*yakūnu*,'' and quite often by silence, leaving the Arabic reader to guess that it is the same Greek word in each case. Fārābī says that the reason many writers refused to use the vocabulary of ''*huwa*'' and ''*huwiyya*'' is that ''*huwiyya*'' is not good Arabic (I,86, p. 114,15–20); we might add that it also does not have tensed cognates, and that it cannot be used in 1-place contexts for ''X exists'' (indeed, the translator of Δ7 seems to avoid all 1-place constructions – in the case of ''the not-white is,'' 1017a18–19, by leaving out the whole phrase). Fārābī himself says that you can use whichever expression you like, as long as you are aware of their misleading grammatical form and take care not to be led astray by it (I,86, pp. 114,20–115,12).

III. THE TWO MAIN SENSES OF ''*MAWJŪD*'' AND THE CORRESPONDING SENSES OF ''*WUJŪD*''

Fārābī's treatment of ''*mawjūd*'' in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part One is his counterpart to *Metaphysics* Δ7, and draws heavily on Δ7. One obvious difference from Δ7 is that Fārābī asks not only about the

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[24] Fārābī adds that *wujūd*, since the word means literally ''finding,'' might be imagined to depend on a human finder. This seems a bit silly – who would really make such a mistake? – but the fact is that Kindī says in *On First Philosophy* that ''human *wujūd*'' consists of two *wujūd*'s (19,4), namely the *wujūd* of the senses and the *wujūd* of the intellect. He means ''two modes of cognition,'' and by ''*mawjūd*'' in this context he means ''cognized'' or ''cognizable'' by a human being; but he does not seem to distinguish sharply between saying that there are two kinds of cognizable object, with two corresponding modes of cognition, and saying that there are two kinds of existing thing, with two corresponding modes of existence. (I cite Kindī from R. Rashed and J. Jolivet, *Œuvres philosophiques et scientifiques d'al-Kindī*, vol. 2: *Métaphysique et cosmologie* [Leiden, 1998].)

[25] Fārābī gives the example ''*hādhā huwa Zaydun*,'' ''this is Zayd,'' and says that it is ''very unlikely in Arabic that they are using ['*huwa*'] here as a pronoun'' (I,83, p. 112,12–13), presumably because if so it would duplicate the demonstrative pronoun ''*hādhā*.''

senses of ''*mawjūd*'' but also about the corresponding senses of ''*wujūd*.'' Indeed, one of Fārābī's main concerns is to ask, for each meaning of ''*mawjūd*,'' whether the things that are *mawjūd* are *mawjūd* through a *wujūd* really distinct from their essences, as the things that are white are white through a whiteness really distinct from their essences. The fact that ''*mawjūd*'' in Arabic is grammatically paronymous creates the appearance that this is so, but Fārābī thinks that this is a basic metaphysical error, and he wants to eliminate this error by an examination of each sense of ''*mawjūd*.'' Since the word ''*astīn*'' in Greek is not paronymous, Aristotle cannot have faced precisely the same problem. Nonetheless, Fārābī thinks that an interpretive exposition of some of what Aristotle says about the different senses of ''*astīn*'' in Δ7 is the best way to solve the problem about whether things are *mawjūd* through a *wujūd* really distinct from their essences. So Fārābī seems to think that Aristotle too was concerned to eliminate the same metaphysical error, presumably because some earlier Greek philosophers (perhaps Plato or Parmenides) had fallen into that error. So the error can be made even independently of the misleading grammatical structures in which Arabic expresses the concept of being, although presumably the grammar of Arabic makes the error all the more tempting.

On Fārābī's analysis, the error of thinking that things are *mawjūd* through a *wujūd* really distinct from their essences can arise, not only from being misled by the paronymous form of ''*mawjūd*,'' but also from confusing different senses of ''*mawjūd*,'' and this is why we can eliminate it by distinguishing those senses. Aristotle in Δ7 distinguishes four senses of being, namely being *per accidens*, being *per se* (the sense of being that is divided into the ten categories – since it is not said of them univocally, it falls into ten sub-senses), being as truth, and being as actuality and potentiality (thus this last sense falls into two sub-senses). Fārābī, however, concentrates overwhelmingly on only two of these senses, being as the true and being *per se* (he first distinguishes being as having a quiddity outside the soul from the sense of being which signifies the categories, I,88, but then reduces these to a single sense, I,90);[26] and his accounts of

[26] See below on the relation between being as having a quiddity and being as signifying the categories. For ''the true'' as a sense of being Fārābī prefers *ṣādiq*, whereas the translator of *Metaphysics* Δ has *ḥaqq*; but Fārābī uses *ḥaqq* at *Principles of the Opinions of the People of the Perfect City* (*Al-Farabi on the Perfect State*, ed., tr., comm., Richard Walzer [Oxford, 1985]), p. 75. Fārābī discusses actuality and potentiality at *Ḥurūf* I,93–8, and these are of course important notions for him, but he takes them as divisions of being-as-having-a-quiddity rather than as independent senses of being. The distinction between existing in potentiality and in actuality or perfection will resurface in a brief but important passage on God's manner of existing, *Ḥurūf* III,240, p. 218,18–21. But it is clear, and noteworthy, that Fārābī takes the fundamental structure of *Metaphysics* Δ7 as a distinction between only two senses of being. Fārābī, and Arabic writers generally, treat actuality and potentiality as *attributes* of being, analogous to unity and multiplicity, rather than as senses of being, and thus treat *Metaphysics* Θ as akin to I rather than to E or Z. This is interesting

both of these are highly expansive and interpretive. Although Δ7 is Aristotle's ''official'' statement of the different senses of being, it is highly compressed and often leaves it unclear how the different senses are supposed to be related or distinguished – the account of being as the true, especially, is extremely compressed and leaves many interpretive questions open. One particular source of interpretive difficulty is that Aristotle does not make fully clear whether each of these senses of being is supposed to apply only in 1-place contexts (''X *is*''), only in 2-place contexts (''X *is* Y''), or both, and, if in both, how its uses in the two kinds of context are related. All the examples he gives of being as the true are 2-place, and modern commentators have often thought that being as the true is for Aristotle a sense only of 2-place being; by contrast, if being *per se* is said non-univocally of the different categories, in one way of substances, in another way of qualities, and so on, it seems that it should be primarily a sense of 1-place being, a quasi-genus (which *would* be a genus if it were univocal) of which substance, quality, and so on are the quasi-species.

Fārābī clearly does not distinguish being-as-truth from being-as-divided-into-the-categories in this way: while he is well aware of the distinction between 1-place and 2-place being,[27] he thinks that both of the main senses of being from Δ7 apply *both* in 2-place and in 1-place contexts. (Fārābī apparently thinks that, for any sense of being, ''Y *is*'' is true in that sense iff, for some X, ''X is Y'' is true in that sense, and I think this is probably right as an interpretation of Aristotle.) But the 1-place contexts are the most important for Fārābī's argument, because it is especially here that the question arises whether what is *mawjūd* is so through a *wujūd* really distinct from its essence. It is also in the case of 1-place being-as-the-true where Fārābī's formulations are most distinctive.

Fārābī's formulas for the two main meanings of being are at first sight unenlightening, and it needs some work to bring out the contrast he is intending to draw. He paraphrases being *per se* as ''being circumscribed [*munḥāz*] by some quiddity outside the soul, whether it has been represented [*tuṣawwira*] in the soul or has not been represented'' (I,88, p. 116,7), and being-as-the-true as ''being outside the soul and being by itself [*bi-'aynihi*] as it is in the soul'' (I,88, p. 116,5). Fārābī does not intend this as a distinction between 1-place being on the one hand and 2-place being on the other.

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and rather surprising, and there is an important contrast with Thomas Aquinas; I will discuss all this in the monograph.

[27] Thus ''there is an expression which they use to signify all things without specifying one thing as opposed to another thing, and they also use it to signify the connection between the predicate and what it is predicated of,'' I,82 p. 111,4–6, cited above; Fārābī will often consider sentences illustrating 1-place and 2-place being separately, but in a way that brings out analogies between the two cases.

Perhaps the paradigm cases of being *per se* are 1-place – to be "circumscribed by some quiddity outside the soul" is a 1-place predicate, applying to beings in the categories (propositions do not have quiddities), and the word for "represent" (the fifth form of ṢWR, *maṣdar* "*taṣawwur*") is technical for conceiving an object, by contrast with judging *that* (the second form of ṢDQ, *maṣdar* "*taṣdīq*") – but Fārābī clearly intends being *per se* to apply to 2-place cases as well (notably III,228-31, discussed below, treats 1-place and 2-place cases in parallel: Aristotle gives both 1-place and 2-place examples of being *per se* in *Posterior Analytics* I,4). Likewise, the paradigm cases of being as the true may be 2-place, but Fārābī makes clear here that he wants to include 1-place cases as well: to quote more fully, being "can be said of every judgment such that what is grasped [*mafhūm*] by it is by itself [*bi-'aynihi*] outside the soul as it is grasped, and in general of everything represented [*mutaṣawwar*] and imagined in the soul and every intelligible / thought [*ma'qūl*][28] which is outside the soul and is by itself [*bi-'aynihi*] as it is in the soul" (I,88, p. 116,3–6). In I,91 he gives the void as an example of something that is not true, because it is not in itself outside the soul (p. 118,4–8), and in III,228, discussing the question "does the void exist [*hal al-khalā'u mawjūdun*]?" and other examples of the εἰ ἔστι question of *Posterior Analytics* II, he says "the meaning of the question is whether what is grasped in the soul through the expression is outside the soul or not, *i.e.*, whether what of it is in the soul is true or not, for the meaning of truth is that what is represented in the soul is by itself outside the soul, and the meaning of being and of truth here is one and the same" (pp. 213,23–214,3).[29] Thus in 1-place cases to say that X is true is to say that the concept of X is instantiated outside the soul.

If the difference between being *per se* and being-as-the-true is not between 1-place and 2-place being, we might think from Fārābī's glosses on the terms in I,88 that the main difference is that being-as-the-true only applies to something once it has been represented in

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[28] In Fārābī's usage, "*ma'qūl*," though literally "understood" or "intelligible," refers to things in the soul rather than to the objects which the soul understands, following the translators' use of "*ma'qūl*" for νόημα in the *De Interpretatione* and in the standard description of the *Categories* as about "words signifying things by means of thoughts." Thus when *De Interpretatione* 16a3–4 says that spoken words are symbols of παθήματα (*athār* in the Arabic) in the soul, Fārābī paraphrases this by "*ma'qūlāt*," *Sharḥ li-Kitāb Arisṭūṭālīs fī al-'Ibāra* 24,13–20; Aristotle does use νόημα = *ma'qūl* at 16a10. *Ma'qūlāt* are thus not restricted to intellectual as opposed to sensitive or imaginative representations: Fārābī is capable of distinguishing *ma'qūlāt ma'qūlāt*, intelligible intelligibles, from *ma'qūlāt maḥsūsāt*, sensible intelligibles (*Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* I,6 p. 64,4–5).

[29] Likewise in III,247, "dialectic does not rise, in the meanings of *mawjūd*, above its ordinary[-language] meanings: and thus by our saying 'is man *mawjūd*?' [*hal al-insān mawjūd*] must be understood the meaning 'is man one of the *mawjūdāt* which are in the world?', like what is said about the heaven, 'it is *mawjūd*' [*innahā mawjūda*], or about the earth, 'it is *mawjūd*,' and all these come back to 'that they are true' [*innahā ṣādiqa*]" (p. 223,13–16). Thus when the dialectician says that the earth is *mawjūd*, he means that it is true. I will come back to this text below.

the soul, whereas being *per se* applies to anything ''whether it has
been represented or whether it has not been represented'' (I,89,
pp. 116,23–117,1): being-as-the-true would thus be the narrower sense,
and this is indeed what Fārābī says in I,91. However, it becomes clear
from the discussion in Part Three that there is a much deeper sense
in which being-as-the-true is broader than being *per se*, because it
applies even to things which do not have quiddities outside the soul,
notably negations and privations (and presumably *per accidens*
unities such as white man): ''it is not the case that everything which
is grasped through some expression, such that what is understood by
it is also outside the soul, also has an essence, e.g. the meaning of
privation: for it is a meaning which is grasped, and it is outside the
soul as it is understood [to be], but it neither is nor has an essence''
(III,240, p. 218,12–15). Accordingly, Fārābī says in III,229 that it's
only once we've established that X has being-as-truth that we can go
on to ask whether it has being-as-having-a-quiddity-outside-the-soul,
where the latter is narrower.[30] Thus we can say that X is *mawjūd* in
the sense of the true when we do not yet know what category X falls
under, or even whether it falls under any category at all (since X may
turn out to be a negation or privation or a *per accidens* unity), and
thus the meaning of ''*mawjūd*,'' in the sense of the true, must apply
univocally to all categories and even to negations. Likewise we can
say ''X *mawjūdun* Y,'' in the sense that the judgment is true, when we
do not know what category Y falls under, or whether it falls under
any category at all, and the meaning will be the same for all
categories and even for negations.

Fārābī is here picking up on a point that Aristotle makes in Δ7,
that being-as-truth applies equally to negative and affirmative propo-
sitions: ''being [εἶναι] and 'is' also signify that [something is] true,
and not-being that [it is] not true but false, equally in affirmations
and in denials, e.g. that Socrates *is* musical [ἔστι Σωκράτης μουσικός]
because this is true, or that Socrates *is* not white [ἔστι Σωκράτης οὐ
λευκός], because that is true'' (1017a31–4). That is: while ''Socrates is
not white'' most obviously asserts a not-being (Socrates' not-being-
white), Aristotle insists that it also asserts a being (Socrates'
being-not-white),[31] although only in the minimal sense of being that
applies equally to all propositions, not in the stronger sense that he
calls being *per se*. But as far as we can tell from Δ7, this univocal
minimal being-as-truth applies only in 2-place contexts, whereas
Fārābī is applying it also in 1-place contexts: the not-white (or

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[30] This two-stage procedure, beginning by investigating being-as-truth and proceeding to
investigate being *per se*, is supposed to apply both in 1-place cases (on which I am
concentrating here) and in 2-place cases. I will return to this passage and to this parallel
below.

[31] Thus Aristotle preposes ''ἔστι'' in ''ἔστι Σωκράτης οὐ λευκός'' to make it clear that
''ἔστι'' does not stand under the negation sign.

privation in general) exists, in the sense of being outside the soul as it is represented within the soul, just as much as the white does. By contrast, being in the sense of having a quiddity outside the soul is said *per prius et posterius* (I,92), primarily of substances and derivatively of things in the other categories (indeed it is not said univocally even of all substances, but primarily of the first causes and derivatively of what exists through them), and does not apply at all to negations.

Fārābī says in I,89 that ''the *wujūd* of what is true is a relation of the intelligibles to what is outside the soul'' (p. 117,4–5). That is: for something to exist (have 1-place being) in the sense that it is outside the soul as it is in the soul, is for some concept to be instantiated. So when I say that the thing exists in this sense, I am predicating existence, not of an external thing, but of a concept, and saying that there is some thing of which that concept holds. (Presumably, if I say ''X *mawjūdun*'' tenselessly, I mean that there is something of which that concept holds at same time, not necessarily at the present.) Thus *wujūd* in this sense is what Fārābī calls a ''second intelligible'' or ''second intention'' [*ma'qūl thānī*]. Fārābī is apparently the inventor of this expression (taken up by Avicenna and Averroes from him, and by the Latins from them), which he has introduced near the beginning of *Ḥurūf* Part I as transmitted (I,7).[32] A second intention is a concept applying to concepts, so something that is predicated of thoughts or ''intelligibles'' in the soul rather than directly of external things. Being-a-predicate, for Fārābī, is a basic example of a second intention, and being-truly-predicated-of-some-external-thing is a second intention derived from that basic second intention. Thus what Fārābī is saying about (1-place) *mawjūd* in the sense of the true, and the corresponding sense of *wujūd*, is close to what Frege

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[32] Fārābī has apparently modeled the phrase on the grammarians' notion of a ''term of second imposition,'' *i.e.* a metalinguistic term: thus in *Ḥurūf* I,8, responding to the objection that positing second intentions will lead to an infinite regress, he compares the term ''accusative,'' which can be put into the accusative without an objectionable regress. On the rather complicated background of the notions of first and second imposition, see Zimmermann esp. pp. xxx–xxxv. Fārābī introduces the domain of second intentions in order to demarcate the realm of logic as opposed to the other philosophical sciences (which deal with first intentions falling under the categories) and to metaphysics (which deals with things not falling under the categories), and also implicitly as opposed to grammar (which deals with words rather than with their meanings; on the background of the *Ḥurūf* in the debate between the philosophers and the grammarians, see Mahdi pp. 44–9, Zimmermann pp. cxviii–cxxix, and A. Elamrani-Jamal, *Logique aristotélicienne et grammaire arabe* [Paris, 1983]). In place of Fārābī's ''*ma'qūl*'' Avicenna usually says ''*ma'nā*,'' but at least once he says that the subject-matter of logic is *al-ma'ānī al-ma'qūla al-thāniya* which depend on *al-ma'ānī al-ma'qūla al-ūlā*, *The Metaphysics of the Healing* (ed. and tr. M.E. Marmura [Provo, 2005]), 7,16–7. ''Intention,'' or ''*intentio*'' in Latin, is usually thought of as equivalent to Arabic ''*ma'nā*'' rather than to ''*ma'qūl*,'' but there is no difference in meaning: Avicenna simply decided to substitute the term ''*ma'nā*'' for Fārābī's ''*ma'qūl*.'' And rightly so: ''*ma'qūl*'' is a very peculiar word to use in this sense, and its meaning becomes clear only against the background of the uses of ''νόημα'' in Aristotle and his commentators.

means by saying that existence, in the sense that is symbolized by the existential quantifier, is a second-order concept (although Fārābī has a psychological notion of concept, not the Fregean notion of a concept as a function whose values are the true and the false). He is apparently the first person to say anything like this. (Aristotle does say in *Metaphysics* E4 that being-as-truth is an affection in the soul, but Aristotle at least in that text is thinking exclusively of 2-place being-as-truth, and not of existence in any sense. It is as far as I know an innovation of Fārābī's to make being-as-truth an all-inclusive univocal 1-place predicate, although he will have been started in this direction by passages like *Metaphysics* Z4 1030a25–26, where some, speaking λογικῶς, say even of not-being that it is, not that it is *simpliciter* but that it is not-being, and this applies to other non-substances too.) However, Fārābī differs from moderns who speak of existence as a second-order concept or second-order predicate in that he does not distinguish sharply between 1-place and 2-place contexts, and is willing to lump 1-place and 2-place being-as-truth under the same sense of being. Thus while I think it is fair to say that what Fārābī calls 1-place being-as-truth is what we symbolize by the existential quantifier, and that he means the same thing by calling it a second intention that we mean by calling it a second-order predicate, it is not the *existential* aspect of it that he thinks makes it second-order.[33] Fārābī also differs from many moderns in that he does not think that ''exists'' is *always* a second-order concept. If the concept of X is instantiated, we can ask whether X also has a quiddity, falling under some one of categories, and, if so, we can say ''X exists'' in a further sense, the sense of having-a-quiddity-outside-the-soul; and existence here is a first-order concept, since it is predicated of the external instance of the concept, not of the concept in the soul. And when I say that X is *mawjūd* in the sense of having a quiddity outside the soul, the *wujūd* which I am predicating of X is just that quiddity.

As I have said above, Fārābī's rewrite of Δ7 differs from the original in that he is concerned not only with the different senses of ''*mawjūd*'' but also with the corresponding senses of ''*wujūd*''; indeed, it seems that one main reason he wants to distinguish between different senses of ''*mawjūd*'' is in order to distinguish corresponding senses of ''*wujūd*,'' and he wants to do this in order to

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[33] If we want to find a modern parallel to Fārābī's second-order 2-place being-as-truth, let it be the Fregean function with two arguments, an object and a concept, whose value is the true if the object falls under the concept, and the false otherwise. Frege would not be especially interested in this second-order concept (why not just apply the first-order concept to the object, rather than applying this awkward second-order concept to the object and the first-order concept?), but he couldn't deny its legitimacy. But of course he would not think of this concept and the second-order concept symbolized by the existential quantifier as giving anything like the same sense of being; to assimilate them in this way would be to undercut what is distinctive about the existential quantifier.

eliminate the appearance, strengthened in Arabic by the paronymous form of the word ''*mawjūd*'' but possible even in Greek, that a thing is *mawjūd* through a *wujūd* other than its essence. The opponent must be asked what he means by ''*mawjūd*'': *mawjūd* as having a quiddity outside the soul, *mawjūd* signifying the categories, or *mawjūd* as the true? If he means *mawjūd* as having-a-quiddity-outside-the-soul, then the corresponding *wujūd* is just that quiddity. If the *mawjūd* is something divisible, something that could be spelled out in a definition, then according to Fārābī we can say that the *wujūd* is the *articulated* quiddity, so that man is a *mawjūd* and the *wujūd* through which he is *mawjūd* is rational animal (I,89, following the Aristotelian usage in which a definition gives the οὐσία or the εἶναι or the τί ἦν εἶναι of a thing). We can also say of each of the parts that would be mentioned in the definition, the genus and differentia or form and matter, that it is the (at least partial) *wujūd* of the thing, and Fārābī says that this applies especially to the differentia (again I,89, again following Aristotle, e.g. *Metaphysics* Δ8 1017b17–22 for the parts as well as ''the τί ἦν εἶναι, whose λόγος is a definition,'' as the οὐσία of the thing; *Metaphysics* Z12 says that the ultimate differentia of a thing is its οὐσία). The *wujūd* corresponding to the sense of *mawjūd* signifying the categories is just the relevant category (so for Socrates it is substance): this is a genus, and so reduces to the *wujūd* of what has a quiddity outside the soul, and Fārābī uses this to justify subsuming *mawjūd*-signifying-the-categories under *mawjūd*-as-having-a-quiddity-outside-the-soul (I,89–90; thus typically he speaks of only two senses of *mawjūd*, having-a-quiddity-outside-the-soul and the true).[34] The distinction between a *mawjūd* in this sense and its *wujūd* can be no greater than that between a thing and an essential part through which the thing exists; in the case of a simple indivisible *mawjūd* there is no distinction at all. *Wujūd* in this sense is something real, but not univocal to things in different categories and perhaps not even to things in the same category, and it is not extrinsic to the essence of the *mawjūd* that possesses it: rather, it just

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[34] The identification of the *wujūd* corresponding to *mawjūd* in this sense with the category depends on the assumption that *mawjūd* in this sense is univocal to all things within a given category; Fārābī wavers on this. The point of speaking of ''*mawjūd* as immediately signifying the categories'' or the like is that it is a sense that immediately falls into ten senses according to what it is predicated of: it is a quasi-genus of the ten categories, and if it were said univocally of them it would be a genus and would be included in the essences of all the categories and of all their species, but in fact when it is said of a quality it is not really distinct from quality, when it is said of a quantity it is not really distinct from quantity, and so on. However, Fārābī considers the possibility that being may have more senses than that. I,88 prefers the view that ''*mawjūd*'' is said equivocally of the different *summa genera*, and then said univocally within each genus, but also admits the possibility that it is also said equivocally of the different things under each *summum genus*; and I,92 says that, within the category of substance, the primary and causally independent substances are more properly *mawjūd* than the substances that depend on them. I will return to the I,92 passage below.

is that essence, or a part of that essence. By contrast, if the question is raised concerning *mawjūd* as the true, this will be *mawjūd* through a *wujūd* which is univocal and extrinsic to the essence (the proposition ''X exists,'' in the sense of ''the concept of X is instantiated,'' is not analytically true), but which is not real, since it is merely a second intention. Only by confusing these two senses of *mawjūd* could we conclude that there is a *wujūd* which is real, predicated univocally of all things, and extrinsic to their essence.

IV. *METAPHYSICS* Δ AND *POSTERIOR ANALYTICS* II

Fārābī's account of the senses of ''*mawjūd*'' in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part One is clever and offers a plausible way of dividing the senses so as to support his conclusion that in no sense of ''*mawjūd*'' does a thing exist through a real *wujūd* really distinct from its essence. But the real depth, and even the real justification, for Fārābī's way of dividing the senses of ''*mawjūd*,'' comes only when the passage is read in conjunction with *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part Three. (I have of course already cited Part Three in making the point that being in the sense of having a quiddity outside the soul is narrower than being as the true.)

Kitāb al-Ḥurūf Part Three is methodologically uniform with Part One, and quite possibly continuous with it, in that it too is examining the many senses of particles (or of transcendental or syncategorematic notions which would in an ideal language be signified by particles), distinguishing their senses in the different syllogistic arts from each other and from ordinary-language uses. However, while *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part One heavily overlaps with *Metaphysics* Δ in the list of terms it investigates, and may be described as Fārābī's version of Δ, Part Three has no real overlap with Δ (or with any other part of the *Metaphysics*), and instead follows (with some expansion) the list of questions or topics of scientific investigation from *Posterior Analytics* II.[35] But Fārābī is doing something deliberate and interesting in including Part Three in the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*. It is not simply that *Posterior Analytics* II organizes some of its discussion under the headings of particles, εἰ ἔστι and τί ἐστι and ὅτι and διότι, and that Fārābī therefore decides to combine it with *Metaphysics* Δ in a catalogue of particles. Rather, Fārābī is claiming that the discussions of *Posterior Analytics* II have metaphysical significance, and that we can give greater scientific depth to the discussions of *Metaphysics* Δ by filling them out from *Posterior Analytics* II; and he

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[35] The only overlap with Δ comes in the discussion of *lima* = διὰ τί, but even this is closer to *Posterior Analytics* II than to Δ2. See below for the relation of Fārābī's list of questions in *Ḥurūf* Part Three to the lists current in the Kindī circle, which explains much of Fārābī's divergence from the list in *Posterior Analytics* II.

thinks that Δ and *Posterior Analytics* II work together to eliminate deep errors that arise when we fail to discern the distinctive scientific meaning of the particles.

The *Posterior Analytics* is read by Arabic philosophers, not simply as analyzing science or as prescribing how to give an exposition of scientific results, but as laying down a method for demonstrating (in Book I) and defining (in Book II). Book II gives, in particular, the scientific method for investigating εἰ ἔστι and τί ἐστι, that is, existence and essence. Also, as Fārābī takes it, this book distinguishes the scientific from the dialectical method of investigating these topics. Furthermore and more surprisingly and interestingly, Fārābī claims that there are distinctive scientific-as-opposed-to-dialectical senses of essence and existence, or different senses of the particles ''*hal*'' and ''*mā*'' in the different syllogistic arts. Thus he thinks that *Posterior Analytics* II is laying down not only a distinctive scientific methodology but also a distinctive scientific ontology, a scientific understanding of essence and existence, which will add scientific depth to Δ, and which together with Δ will give a crucial intellectual substructure for the rest of the *Metaphysics*.

The most distinctive contribution of *Posterior Analytics* II,1-10 to the understanding of the four scientific questions, and the key to its account of definition in particular, is the claim that the investigation τί ἐστι stands to the investigation εἰ ἔστι as the investigation διότι stands to the investigation ὅτι. That is: to say, scientifically, *what* X is, is to give the *cause* of the fact *that* X is. Thus, for example, to say *what* a lunar eclipse is is the same as to give the cause of the fact that there *is* a lunar eclipse, namely that it occurs due to the interposition of the earth between the moon and the sun; this statement of the cause of lunar eclipses will be incorporated into the scientific definition of lunar eclipse as (say) ''darkening of the moon at opposition due to the interposition of the earth between the moon and the sun.'' One important consequence, for Aristotle, is that we cannot scientifically investigate what a lunar eclipse is unless we have first established (whether by sense-perception or by inference) that there are lunar eclipses,[36] just as we cannot scientifically investigate *why* the earth is spherical until we have first established *that* it is spherical. Now this might seem to threaten a vicious circle: we cannot investigate what X is until we have established *that* X is, but how can we hope to establish that X is if we don't yet know what it is that we're trying to establish, *i.e.*, if we don't yet know what X is? Aristotle breaks this circle by saying that, in order to investigate

[36] Presumably he isn't saying that we can't investigate unless we know that there is a lunar eclipse *right now*; but we must know at least that there are potentially or habitually lunar eclipses (and we are not going to get very far investigating their causes unless there were eclipses in the past whose circumstances were recorded and which can therefore be investigated to determine their causes).

whether X is, we have to begin from a preliminary account of what X is, but that this preliminary account, unlike the scientific account of what X is, does not cite the causes of the fact that X is. Thus in the case of lunar eclipse, the preliminary account might be ''darkening of the moon at opposition.'' That preliminary account is enough for us to investigate whether there are lunar eclipses or not, *i.e.*, whether the moon is sometimes darkened at opposition. If it is, then we can investigate *why* the moon is darkened at opposition; and if we discover (say) that the moon is darkened at opposition because the earth, when it comes directly between the moon and the sun, blocks the light of the sun from reaching the moon and being reflected off its surface, then we can incorporate this causal discovery into a scientific definition of lunar eclipse as ''darkening of the moon at opposition due to the interposition of the earth between the moon and the sun'' or the like.

Fārābī in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* III,215–44 explains all this faithfully and intelligently (for the quiddity of a thing, asked for in the scientific use of the interrogative particles *mā* or *mādhā* [''what?''], as a cause of the *wujūd* of the thing, so coinciding with what would would be asked for by the particles *lima* or *li-mādhā* or *bi-mādhā* [''why'' or ''through what''], see III,216–17; for the eclipse example, and the preliminary and final accounts of what an eclipse is, see III,244). And in trying to draw ontological implications out of *Posterior Analytics* II, and to make ontology scientific by this means, he is clearly inspired by Aristotle's *Metaphysics* Z17, where Aristotle proposes to reframe the investigation ''what is X?'' as a causal investigation, taking *what X is* as the cause of *that X is*, as the *Posterior Analytics* recommends (Z17 recycles some of the examples from *Posterior Analytics* II – eclipse, thunder, man). To state *that X is* in a way that makes it amenable to causal investigation, we must rewrite it with a 2-place ''is,'' ''S is P,'' so that we can investigate why P belongs to S (thus rewrite ''eclipse is'' as ''darkening-at-opposition belongs to the moon''). Fārābī takes up this point, using Aristotle's examples of 2-place rewriting from *Metaphysics* Z17, at *Ḥurūf* III,244 pp. 221,13–222,2. And Fārābī is here picking up the genuinely Aristotelian thesis that scientific methodology rather than dialectic, the *Posterior Analytics* rather than the *Topics*, is the right starting-point for investigating essences.

However, Fārābī also wants to connect this account of how we investigate εἰ ἔστι and τί ἐστι with what he has said in Part One about the different senses of being, and with an account of the different meanings of the particles in the different syllogistic arts. By Aristotle's rules the dialectician never investigates ''why'' questions, and so the dialectical definitions (the dialectician's answers to ''what'' questions) do not include the cause: to know, for instance,

that a lunar eclipse is not merely a darkening of the moon at opposition, but a darkening of the moon at opposition due to the interposition of the earth between moon and sun, depends on a precise knowledge of this particular object, whereas the dialectician has a less precise ability that extends to all objects in general. Thus it is reasonable to say that the preliminary definitions from which the scientist begins are dialectical definitions, answering τί ἐστι / *mā huwa* in the sense which the dialectician attaches to this question and to the interrogative particle *mā* = τί, rather than in the special scientific sense of the question and the particle. (A ''definition'' in this loose sense expresses a ''quiddity'' in a correspondingly loose sense, the sense which justifies the loose claim in I,89 that everything that has being as truth also has some quiddity; when III,240 contradicts this, and says that privation does not have a quiddity, it is using the scientific sense in which only species of the categories have quiddities.) So it seems that the procedure of investigation which *Posterior Analytics* lays down for the 1-place questions, whether X is and what X is, will have three stages: first a preliminary dialectical investigation of what X is (or an investigation of this question in the dialectical sense of *mā*), then an investigation of whether X is, and then (assuming the answer is yes) a properly scientific investigation of what X is (or an investigation of this question in the distinctively scientific sense of *mā*).

However, it will have to be more complicated than this for Fārābī. As we have seen, Fārābī identifies the 1-place question *hal X mawjūdun*, in the sense of being as the true, with the question whether there are any X's, *i.e.* whether the concept of X is instantiated. We might naturally identify this with the question εἰ ἔστι = *hal mawjūdun* of *Posterior Analytics* II, but there is a problem: *Posterior Analytics* II says that the cause of the fact *that* X is is *what* X is, but *Metaphysics* E4 says that being-as-truth has no cause except ''some affection of thought'' (1027b34–1028a1). Fārābī solves this by bringing his version of the Δ7 distinction between two senses of being into *Posterior Analytics* II as well. The crucial texts are in *Ḥurūf* III,228–31, on the uses of *hal* (or *hal mawjūdun*) in the sciences. III,228–9 are concerned with 1-places uses, *hal X mawjūdun*, and distinguish two versions of this question, which can and should be asked in sequence. The initial question, e.g., whether void exists, is asking whether the concept of X in the soul corresponds to something outside the soul (III,228, esp. p. 213,22–3); then, if the answer is yes, we can ask *hal X mawjūdun* in a second sense, meaning ''whether this thing has something by which it is constituted and which is *in* it'' (III,229 p. 214,6–7); if the answer to this second question is also yes, we can go on to ask ''what is it'' or ''what is its *wujūd*,'' asking for that by which this thing is constituted, which will be a cause of its existing

in the second sense (III,229 p. 214,9–12). (III,230–31 describe the analogous series of questions in the 2-place case: first *hal X mawjū-dun Y* asking whether the subject and predicate are combined outside the soul as they are in the soul; then, if yes, *hal X mawjūdun Y* asking whether the *wujūd* or constitution or quiddity of X necessitates that it is Y; then, if yes, the inquiry into the cause of X's being and being Y.) Fārābī says explicitly that the first sense of *hal X mawjūdun* is asking about being as truth (III,228 p. 213,23–214,3), and indeed it fits precisely with the account of being as truth in *Ḥurūf* Part One. And it is likewise obvious that the second sense of *hal X mawjūdun* is asking about being as having a quiddity outside the soul as described in *Ḥurūf* Part One ("that by which this thing is constituted," which is its *wujūd* in the second sense, is what is signified by its definition, III,229 p. 214,9–11).

Thus Fārābī has split the *Posterior Analytics* II investigation εἰ ἔστι X into two stages corresponding to the two senses of ἔστι from Δ7 as he interprets them. After giving a "definition" which unpacks the content of the concept of X, we will first ask whether X has being-as-truth, *i.e.* whether the concept is instantiated; this is a univocal concept, and the question can be asked and answered even if we do not know what category X falls under, or whether it falls under any category at all. Then, if the answer is yes, we will go on to ask whether X has being in the second sense, *i.e.* whether it has a quiddity. This is no longer a question about the *concept* of X, but about an X really existing outside the soul, asking whether it is X through some simple positive quiddity (rather than through a privation or through the combination of two quiddities). This question is not univocal, since e.g. substantial quiddities and qualitative quiddities are not univocally quiddities; rather, there is a question whether X is X through a substantial quiddity, another question whether X is X through a qualitative quiddity, and so on. Then, if the answer to one of these questions is yes, we will go on to ask for the cause of X's being, in the sense of being as divided into the categories, and this cause will be this quiddity. The claim of *Metaphysics* E4, that being-as-truth has no cause outside the soul, can be reconciled with the procedure of *Posterior Analytics* II by saying that the quiddity is the cause, not of being-as-truth, but only of being-as-divided-into-the-categories: the *Posterior Analytics* question εἰ ἔστι is not simply about being-as-truth, but rather has one sense for each sense of being.

Thus the *Posterior Analytics*, as Fārābī reads it, envisages not a three-stage but a four-stage process. In a 1-place case, there will be first an investigation of *what* X is in the dialectical sense of *mā*, then an investigation of *whether* X is in the sense of being-as-truth, then

an investigation of *whether* X is in the sense of having-a-quiddity-outside-the-soul, then an investigation of *what* X is in the scientific sense of *mā*. (Analogously in the 2-place case as described in *Ḥurūf* III,230–31, once we have dialectical definitions of X and Y, we investigate *whether* X is Y in the sense of being-as-truth, then *whether* X is Y *per se*, then *why* X is Y: this is an analogy and more than an analogy, since we investigate 1-place cases of being by unpacking them as 2-place cases, e.g. investigating whether and what lunar eclipse is by investigating whether and why darkened-at-opposition belongs to moon, according to *Ḥurūf* III,244.) And since Fārābī says that dialectic discusses only the ordinary-life sense of *mawjūd*, and that this means that something is true, *i.e.* (in 1-place cases) that it exists outside the soul (III,247, p. 223,13–21), we can say that the four stages investigate first *what* X is in the dialectical sense, then *whether* X is in the dialectical sense, then *whether* X is in the scientific sense, then *what* X is in the scientific sense. (Fārābī cites here Alexander of Aphrodisias, who in his *Topics* commentary [53,2–10] had noted a dispute about whether in questions like ''do the gods exist?'' the predicate is a genus or an accident. As Fārābī notes [III,246, p. 223,9–12], Alexander himself classifies these as questions of accident; Fārābī implies that Alexander is right to do so, since in a *Topics* commentary he is discussing not scientific questions but only the questions that arise in dialectical encounters, where we ask whether X exists only in the dialectical sense.)

Dialectic and science thus proceed in opposite directions, dialectic from *mā* to *hal* or from essence (to the extent that it can be expressed in a dialectical definition) to existence, while science, picking up where dialectic leaves off, proceeds from *hal* to *mā* or from existence to essence. Since science understands the essence of a thing as the cause of its existence, which we can grasp only after we have grasped the fact of its existence, the scientific philosopher will not imagine an essence which does not in itself possess existence, or an existence which needs to be added to the thing from without, as an accident. Fārābī's implication is that only someone who confuses the scientific with the dialectical meanings of *hal* and *mā* – or, rather, someone who is familiar only with the dialectical meanings, and who tries to do philosophy by representing features of dialectical investigation as features of reality – will be tempted to regard existence as something real and really distinct from the essence of the thing to which it applies. When people think they can abstract away from the existence of X to grasp the essence of X, the subject of which existence is predicated, but which is of itself indifferent to existence and non-existence, they are not in fact grasping any real thing: they may formulate a definition of X, independently of whether X exists, but that definition will be merely a nominal definition, spelling out what

is implicit in the concept of X or what the word ''X'' means, and not what the thing X is: ''someone who knows *what* man, or anything else, is must first know *that* it is: for no one knows what a non-existent thing is, but rather [they know] what the formula or the name signifies, when I say goatstag; but *what* goatstag is, it is impossible to know'' (*Posterior Analytics* II,7 92b4–8). If we are really talking about X, it is not something indifferent to existence and non-existence, and so existence cannot be affirmed of it without tautology. There must be some way to say ''X exists'' without tautology (there must be, in particular, some instances in which ''X exists'' can be meaningful but false), but here the subject of the judgment is not any real thing outside the mind, but rather the concept of X in the mind, which is what the word ''X'' immediately signifies, and the predicate is affirming of this concept in the mind that there is something outside the mind that corresponds to it. There is thus a good Aristotelian genealogy behind Fārābī's Fregean conclusion about the logical syntax of existence – un-Fregean, of course, in its understanding of concepts as things in the mind.

V. FĀRĀBĪ AND HIS OPPONENTS ON BEING AND GOD

If Fārābī takes such care to avert the error of supposing that things exist through a real *wujūd* really distinct from their essences, he must have had real opponents, people who really fell into that error (as Fārābī saw it). But who?

One possible target is the thesis of many Mu'tazilite *mutakallimūn* that what is non-existent is a thing [*al-ma'dūmu shay'un*]: ''when God wishes to create a thing, he says to it 'be!' and it is'' (Q. 2:117 etc.), so there must be some not-yet-existent thing which God is addressing (and the results are different when God addresses his command to a not-yet-existent human or to a not-yet-existent horse), and that same thing is first in the state of non-existence ['*adam*] and then in the state of existence [*wujūd*]. The Mu'tazilites are certainly a possible target: Fārābī is at pains in the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* to distinguish philosophy, which can be demonstrative, from *kalām*, which is at best dialectical, and he might welcome the opportunity to distinguish the philosophical from the *kalām* analysis of *wujūd*. But the philosophers are by no means all agreed on the analysis of *wujūd*, and Fārābī will have had opponents within the philosophers' camp as well. When Aristotle draws distinctions in senses of being, he too is trying to avert errors into which he thinks earlier philosophers fell by not distinguishing: doubtless the Megarians, but in the first instance Plato and Parmenides, who (as Aristotle represents them) posit a single being-itself, such that for anything else to exist is for it, not existent by its essence, to exist by participating in being-itself. (Parmenides, unlike Plato, drew the conclusion that nothing else

does exist.)[37] And the position that Aristotle is opposing had not died out between his time and Fārābī's, and indeed it was sometimes treated as Aristotelian. Thus Proclus' teacher Syrianus in commenting on the *Metaphysics* and explaining the sense in which metaphysics is a science of being *qua* being, says that ''beings, *qua* beings, proceed from being, which is not *this* being, but being-itself'' (*In Metaphysica* 45,29–30); the *Liber de Causis* says that ''all things have being [*huwiyya*] on account of the first being, all living things are moved *per se* on account of the first life, and all intellectual things have knowledge on account of the first intellect'' (92,2–4),[38] reflecting Proclus *Elements of Theology* Proposition 101, where voῦς is prior to all intelligent things, life to all living things, and being, most universally, to all things which *are* or participate in being. Al-Kindī, drawing on the Qurʾānic name of God *al-ḥaqq* but also on *Metaphysics* α1 993b23–31, where if X is the cause to Y of its being true, X is truer than Y, so that the principles of eternal things are the truest of all things, and where in general the truth of a thing is proportional to its being, says that ''the cause of the existence [*wujūd*] and affirmation [*thabāt*] of everything is the Truth [*al-ḥaqq*], since everything that has a being [*inniyya*] has a truth / reality [*ḥaqīqa*]; so the Truth necessarily exists [*mawjūd*] for beings [*inniyyāt*] which exist. And the most noble part of philosophy and its highest in degree is first philosophy, I mean the knowledge of the first Truth which is the cause of every Truth'' (9,12–14).[39] These texts thus seem to be

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[37] For Aristotle's critique of the failure of Parmenides (and others following him) to distinguish the senses of being, see *Physics* I,2–3 and *Metaphysics* N2.

[38] I cite the *Liber de causis* from O. Bardenhewer, *Die pseudo-aristotelische Schrift Ueber das reine Gute bekannt unter dem Namen Liber de causis* (Freiburg, 1882). The idea that the more universal things are the higher causes, with being-itself [*huwiyya* or *inniyya*] as the most universal, is crucial to the book, and is first stated right near the beginning, 59,3–60,3.

[39] On Kindī's intentions in this passage, and its Aristotelian and neo-Platonic background, see Cristina d'Ancona, ''Al-Kindi on the subject-matter of the First Philosophy. Direct and indirect sources of Falsafa al-ūlā, Chapter one,'' in J.A. Aertsen and A. Speer (eds.), *Was ist Philosophie im Mittelalter?* (Berlin and New York, 1998), pp. 841–55. In fact, for Kindī's project in *On First Philosophy*, ''being'' is less important than ''one'' as the predicate that God possesses primarily, and other things only derivatively and improperly. Fārābī seems to center the *Ḥurūf* on the concept of being and, surprisingly, does not include unity among the equivocal transcendental or syncategorematic terms that he investigates (although it is in his model, *Metaphysics* Δ6); so it might seem that if he is setting out to refute Kindī, he is refuting him on a relatively minor point and letting the major one pass. However, Fārābī gives the missing treatment of unity (in fact at much greater length than his treatment of being) in his *Kitāb al-Wāḥid wa-al-waḥda* (edited by Muhsin Mahdi [Casablanca, 1989]): if the *Kitāb al-Wāḥid* is not actually a missing part of the fragmentarily transmitted *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* (as Mahdi suggested), it is at any rate a necessary complement, needed to complete the argument of the *Ḥurūf* – perhaps it was originally intended as part of the *Ḥurūf* but got too long and was spun off as a separate treatise. And while the *Kitāb al-Wāḥid* is not overtly polemical (indeed, at first sight it looks rather boringly expository), it can be shown that it is in fact drawing the conceptual distinctions between senses of unity needed to overthrow the Kindian project (and that Averroes correctly appreciated this, and treated it as continuous with the *Ḥurūf*). I will discuss this in detail in my monograph.

licensing, in the name of Aristotelian first philosophy, an inference from the many things-that-are to a single first being-itself in which they participate in order to exist (or a truth-itself in which they participate in order to be true and thus to exist).

It seems likely, then, that Fārābī wishes to restate what he sees as the correct Aristotelian scientific understanding of being, and distinction of its several senses, against Kindī and his circle, including the authors / adaptors of such texts as the *Liber de Causis*, whom he wishes to expel from the history of scientific philosophy.[40] This likelihood is strengthened by the fact that the Kindians, like Fārābī in the *Ḥurūf*, make heavy use of particles and of names derived from particles in order to signify metaphysical notions including being. The Kindians use, of course, *inniyya* (or *anniyya*) and *huwiyya* and *māhiyya* (sometimes *mā'iyya*) and the standard category-names, but also several terms which did not survive into the standard Arabic philosophical lexicon: from *huwa* the peculiar *tahawwī* (apparently a fifth-form *maṣdar*, ''being caused to be,'' Kindī *On First Philosophy* 41,5); from *laysa* ''is not'' (grammatically a defective verb, but classified by Fārābī as a particle, *Alfāẓ* 45,11–12) the nouns *lays* ''not-being'' and the back-formation *ays* ''being'';[41] and the abstracts from interrogative particles *haliyya* = existence, *ayyiyya* = specific differentia (from *ayy* ''which''), and *limiyya* = cause (from *lima* ''why'' = διὰ τί). In the prologue to *On First Philosophy* Kindī distinguishes four scientific questions, *hal*, *mā*, *ayy* and *lima*, asking respectively for the existence [*inniyya*], the genus, the specific differentia, and the final cause (11,4–9). S.M. Stern has shown that this list and its variants (the list is very common and almost standard in the Kindī school, with *a-mawjūd* sometimes substituted for *hal* and *kayfa* for *ayy*), which are accompanied by some quite un-Aristotelian interpretations of what the questions are asking

for,[42] are taken not directly from the list of four scientific questions in the *Posterior Analytics*, which Kindī and his circle did not have access to, but rather from a list of questions in the sixth-century Alexandrian prolegomena to philosophy (surviving in the versions of Elias and David), εἰ ἔστι, τί ἐστι, ὁποῖόν τί ἐστι and διὰ τί ἐστι.[43] Fārābī in *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* Part Three is taking up this Kindian list of particles and their meanings and correcting it from *Posterior Analytics* II; in particular, he wants to distinguish the scientific from the dialectical meanings of these particles, and to set out what he sees as the Aristotelian scientific approach to essence and existence, founded on the analogy τί ἐστι: εἰ ἔστι::διότι::ὅτι. Fārābī is accepting from the Kindians that particles can signify metaphysical things and are indeed the grammatical type best suited to signifying metaphysical things, but it is crucial for him to distinguish the metaphysical sense, in which (for instance) *astīn* and its Arabic equivalents signify a first intention transcending the categories, from the logical sense in which they signify a mere second intention. And, in the process, he wants to block an unscientific metaphysics, and an over-hasty solution to the problem of the ontological and theological descriptions of metaphysics, that turns on saying that the *wujūd* in which all things participate is something both real (like *wujūd* from *mawjūd* as having an essence) and extrinsic to the things (like *wujūd* as truth), namely God.

At this point it might be asked how different Fārābī's own metaphysics really is. After all, he opens the *Principles of the Opinions of the People of the Perfect City* by saying that ''the first being [*mawjūd*] is the first cause of being [*wujūd*] to all other beings [*mawjūdāt*]'' (p. 56), which sounds close to the formulations we have seen from Syrianus through Kindī. (One might even cite this as evidence that the ontotheology of the *Perfect City* is merely ''exoteric,'' by contrast with the scientific and non-theological metaphysics of the *Ḥurūf*.) However, it can be shown (although I will not do this in detail here) that the *Perfect City* is remarkably scrupulous in applying the terminological and conceptual clarifications of the

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[42] Sometimes *mā* asks for the genus and *ayy* for the differentia; sometimes *mā* asks for the whole genus-differentia definition and *kayfa* for the ἴδιον. *Lima* is always taken to ask for the final cause; sometimes *mā* (asking for the genus) is associated with the material cause and *kayfa* (asking for the differentia) with the formal cause, sometimes *mā* (asking for the definition) with the formal cause, *hal* with the material cause and *kayfa* with the efficient cause.

[43] See Stern in A. Altmann and S.M. Stern, *Isaac Israeli* (Oxford, 1958), pp. 10–23. In the Alexandrian list of questions, ὁποῖόν τί ἐστι might be translated either as *ayy* or as *kayfa*; by διὰ τί ἐστι the texts do indeed mean the purpose. The Alexandrians list these as introductory questions which one should ask about philosophy itself, before beginning its study proper, but this is clearly a general scheme which is being applied to the case of philosophy. These four questions are all questions that should be asked, in series, about a term X; the *Posterior Analytics*' distinction, and analogy, between the 1-place questions εἰ ἔστι and τί ἐστι and the 2-place questions ὅτι and διότι has been lost.

Ḥurūf, and can in fact be seen as carrying out a metaphysical program from the *Ḥurūf*. It is perfectly Aristotelian to investigate the cause of the existence of a thing, and while in a sense the essence of X is the cause of the existence of X, that essence, as expressed in the scientific definition of X, may contain references to things outside X, as the definition of lunar eclipse contains a reference to the earth as the cause blocking the sun's light from the moon. Any science takes for granted (as given by the senses or by hypothesis) the existence of its primitives (e.g. for geometry, point, straight line, circle) but investigates and tries to prove the existence of everything else that falls under its domain (e.g. regular pentagons) by deriving their existence from that of the primitives; and, at least on Fārābī's understanding of Aristotle (supportable by *Metaphysics* E1 1025b2–18), what is treated as primitive in the particular sciences is no longer primitive from the point of view of the universal science of metaphysics, and its essence and existence can be investigated. If X turns out not to be a primitive, but rather is caused to exist by Y, in such a way that the scientific definition of X contains a reference to Y, then Y will be a cause of *wujūd* to X, and Y will be *mawjūd* in a stronger sense than X is. Thus *Ḥurūf* I,92 says that *mawjūd* in the sense of having a quiddity outside the soul is said *per prius et posterius*; and

what is more perfect with respect to its quiddity and independent of other things in order for its quiddity to be realized, while other things require this category in order for their quiddity to be realized and to be understood, this is more deserving than the other things that it should be, and should be said to be, *mawjūd*. Next, what in this category [*i.e.* substance] requires a differentia or genus in this category in order for its quiddity to be realized is more deficient with respect to quiddity than the thing in this category which is a cause of the realization of its quiddity. And among the things in this category which are causes by which the quiddity is realized, some are more perfect than others in respect of quiddity and more deserving to be called *mawjūd*. And one continues in this way to ascend in this category to the more and more perfect in respect to quiddity until one reaches what in it is most perfect in respect to quiddity, such that there does not exist anything in this category more perfect than it, whether this is one or more than one. And this one thing, or these things, are more deserving than other things to be said to be *mawjūd*. And if something is discovered outside all these categories [as God is for Fārābī] which is the ur-cause [*musabbib*] of the quiddity's being realized, which is prior to anything in this category, this is the cause in the quiddity of the other things in this category, and what is in this category is the cause in the quiddity of the other categories. Thus the beings, where what is meant by "being" is what has a quiddity outside the soul, are ordered by this order. (I,92, pp. 118,16–119,8)

Thus Fārābī takes the Aristotelian ontological dependence of accidents on substances (which has the result that being is said primarily

of substances and derivatively of accidents) as corresponding, in the universal science of being, to the causal-definitional dependence of eclipse on moon and sun and earth in astronomy; and he thinks that we can trace such causal-definitional dependence back further, not just from accidents to substances, but also from ordinary substances to an ultimate simple, or ultimate simples, and that only these will be *mawjūd* (in the sense of having a quiddity) in the primary sense. And, as we have seen from *Ḥurūf* I,89, *wujūd* corresponding to *mawjūd* as having-a-quiddity can be distinguished from its bearer if the *mawjūd* is a complex and the *wujūd* is the articulated quiddity expressed in the definition or some special part of that articulated quiddity, but in the case of a simple the *mawjūd* and its *wujūd* are absolutely identical.

Fārābī takes this point up again in *Ḥurūf* Part Three, with application specifically to metaphysics or divine science and to God. We can ask whether God exists in the sense of being-as-truth, just as we can ask whether man exists in this sense, *i.e.* whether the concepts are instantiated, but in the case of man we can further ask whether (unlike the not-white) he also exists in the sense of having a real positive quiddity by which he is constituted, which would be his *wujūd*; but since God has no cause by which he is constituted, and cannot be scientifically defined, does it follow that God (like the not-white) does not exist in this second sense (so III,239)? Fārābī answers that God too exists in the second sense, not in that he has a quiddity or *wujūd*, but in that he is a quiddity or *wujūd*: even if we begin with a complex, we must ultimately reach something simple which is its own *wujūd*, on pain of an infinite regress (III,240–41). We may of course, ask whether God exists in the sense of asking whether there is some cause through which he is constituted, but in this sense, the answer is no (III,243). Fārābī says that we must start by investigating in this way, in order to clear away imperfections from God, and thus to enable a grasp of God's positive *wujūd*: ''what exists [*mawjūd*] absolutely [*'alā al-iṭlāq*] is the *mawjūd* which is not related to anything at all. And what exists absolutely is the *mawjūd* whose *wujūd* is only through itself and not through anything else other than it; and our saying about it 'does it exist [*hal huwa mawjūdun*]?' is in this sense. And what is sought / investigated here is the contrary of what is sought / investigated in our saying 'does man exist?': for what is sought / investigated in our saying 'does man exist?' is whether man has a constitution through something else or not, whereas here what is sought / investigated in our saying 'does it exist?' is whether it is something whose constitution is through itself and not through something other than itself, and whether its *wujūd* is a *wujūd* that does not require, in order for it to be *mawjūd* through it, anything else which is in any way other than itself'' (III,242, pp.

219,17–220,2). Fārābī adds the analogous point about investigating
2-place being with respect to God, that asking e.g. ''is he [*hal huwa
mawjūdun*] intellect'' means not asking whether there is some middle
term that connects him with intellect, but ''whether the *wujūd*
through which his constitution is not through something other than
he is that he is intellect . . . and whether his essence [*dhāt*] is that he
is intellect'' (III,242 p. 220,2–4); likewise, to ask ''is he [*hal huwa
mawjūdun*] an agent or cause of the *wujūd* of what is other than
himself'' (p. 220,5) is not to ask whether he acts through some
attribute or some act superadded to his essence, but rather whether
his very *wujūd* or quiddity necessitates that he is the agent or cause
of the existence of other things.

This is clearly a charter for the theology of the *Perfect City*, but it
is also clearly founded on the theory of the meanings of *mawjūd* and
wujūd in *Ḥurūf* Part One. And when Fārābī says that we investigate
the essence and other predicates of simple things by investigating
whether they are simple things, denying everything that would entail
composition, and seeing what remains, he is ultimately following
Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: ''there is no investigation or teaching in the
case of simples, but rather a different mode of investigating such
things'' (Z17 1041b9–11); ''those things which are just a being [ὅπερ
εἶναι τι] and an actuality, about such things there is no being
deceived, but rather either thinking them or not; but the τί ἐστι is
investigated about them, whether they are such or not'' (Θ10
1051b30–33) – that is, the only way to ''investigate'' such a simple
substance, beginning with a nominal definition like ''the mover of
the daily motion,'' is to investigate whether it is such a simple
substance, and, if the answer is yes, the investigation ceases. What
results, at least as Fārābī develops it, is an ontotheology, but it is an
ontotheology very different from that of Syrianus and Proclus and
the *Liber de Causis*, on which God (or for Syrianus and Proclus the
second principle, the ἓν ὄν) is a universal form of being, causing
being to all things immediately, and therefore being prior to the less
universal causes which communicate more particular attributes to
particular ranges of beings. For Fārābī God is the immediate cause
only of the intelligence of the outermost heaven; he is not universally
related to all beings equally, but is the end-result of a step-by-step
retracing of things, via the heavens, back to their first causes. God is
his own *wujūd*, but if there is any sense in which he is the *wujūd* of
other things, it is only in the sense in which earth might be called the
wujūd of lunar eclipse because it is mentioned in the causal defini-
tion of lunar eclipse, and has nothing to do with the existence shared
by all things, which for Fārābī can only be the second intention
being-as-truth.

Avicenna, of course, is deeply influenced by Fārābī's understanding of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* and of metaphysics as a science. But he may also have taken more from the tradition of Proclus and the Kindī circle than Fārābī was willing to. This is a very complicated issue. But what is certain is that Averroes, reading Avicenna and reading the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf*, thought that Avicenna was guilty of the same errors that Fārābī had already exposed, and that only a confusion between *mawjūd* in the sense that is divided into the categories and *mawjūd* in the sense of the true, into which Avicenna was led by his reliance on systematically misleading Arabic translations, could have led him to conclude that the *wujūd* of things other than God is something real and univocal and extrinsic to the essences of the things. Averroes makes deep use of the *Ḥurūf*, and of the closely related *Kitāb al-Wāḥid wa-al-waḥda*, in his *Epitome of the Metaphysics*, *Long Commentary on the Metaphysics*, and *Tahāfut al-Tahāfut*, especially against Avicenna; and in so doing he helped ensure a future for Fārābī's analysis of the senses of being, and for the critical reflection on the concept of being which Fārābī thought was the necessary first step in any scientific metaphysics. I will try to explore this history, in Averroes and in Thomas Aquinas and others who are concerned to respond to Averroes and thus (whether they know it or not) to Fārābī, in my monograph in progress, as well as exploring more deeply the connections and tensions between the *Kitāb al-Ḥurūf* and Fārābī's other writings. I hope to have said enough here to show that the *Ḥurūf* was intrinsically very important, as a contribution to metaphysics and specifically ontology, as well as to the reception of Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (recentered on Δ as well as the more obvious Λ) and more generally to the retrospective imagination of Greek culture and language and to the elaboration of the idea of an ideal language and of the tensions between logical and grammatical form. I think it can also be shown that the *Ḥurūf* was not a dead end, but rather opens a path to Fārābī's other writings and to those of his Arabic and Latin successors.[44]

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[44] For a first sketch of what Averroes and Thomas did with the *Ḥurūf*, see my review of Anthony Kenny, *Aquinas on Being* (Oxford, 2002), in *Philosophical Review*, 115.3 (July 2006): 391–5.