

ENGLISH SUMMARY

This article, written for the commemoration of the first millenium of Al Fârâbî's death, attempts to evaluate his achievements within the perspective of intellectual history and to determine his most outstanding and long-lived contribution to the cause of civilization.

One of the relatively recent publications on Al Fârâbî has drawn our attention to the great indebtedness of St. Thomas Aquinas to Al Fârâbî.¹ Part of the present article consists of a demonstration of the significance of this repercussion of Al Fârâbî's ideas, in view of the fact that the synthesis realized by St. Thomas between religion and philosophy was undoubtedly one of the most fundamental and momentous intellectual achievements of the Middle Ages. For, thereby, a reconciliation was brought about between science and religion, and religious fanaticism was rendered relatively harmless to the progress of science ; and the Middle Ages was a period in which such a reconciliation was sorely needed.

Al Fârâbî has an outstanding place in the introduction of Greek ideas into the Islamic civilization. In Islam he has been called "The Second Teacher,, in comparison to Aristotle, the First Teacher. Nevertheless, his above-mentioned service to humanity at large, by preparing a secure foundation for the progress of science and an honorable place for scientific spirit, must be deemed of greater moment, and it was undoubtedly a contribution of longer life. Consequently this article deals briefly with Al Fârâbî's philosophy of religion.

Al Fârâbî had quite radical religious ideas. It would be natural for him, therefore, to hesitate to express his religious ideas always openly; and in fact, this seems to have been the case. Moreover, his opinions on religious matters are not exactly the same in the various extant works attributed to him. It is interesting, therefore, to

¹ Robert Hammond, *The Philosophy of Alfarabi and its Influence on Medieval Thought*, New York 1947. Such an influence of Al Fârâbî on St. Thomas had apparently been claimed in another book which appeared several years earlier : Robert Hamui, *Alfarabi's Philosophy and its Influence on Scholasticism*, Sydney 1928 (See, *Isis*, vol. 19, 1933, p. 526-27).

see that Al Fârâbî was criticized by several medieval scholars for having set forth differing ideas on certain questions, or for not having been consistent in all his writings.² Lately too, at least three of Al Fârâbî's works have drawn the attention of scholars in a similar manner. It has been shown or claimed that the contents of these writings exhibit considerable divergences with the views expounded in other works of Al Fârâbî, i. e., other works which we know with greater certainty to belong to him. The authenticity of the attribution of these works to Al Fârâbî has, therefore, been questioned.³

² E. g., Ibn Ṭufayl (see, Carra de Vaux, *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, art. "Al Fârâbî", French edition, livraison 18, p. 58 ; G. Quadri, *La Philosophie arabe dans l'Europe Médiévale, des origines à Averroès*, Paris 1947, p. 71) and Ibn Sab'în (see, S. Pines, "Etudes sur Awḥad al Zamân Abû'l Barakât al Baghdâdî", *Revue des Etudes Juives*, Nouvelles series, vol. 4, 1938, reprint, p. 77-78 note). Moreover, al Ghazâlî finds contradiction between an explanation of prophetic miracles offered by Al Fârâbî and his philosophy in general (I. Madkour, *La Place d'Al Fârâbî dans l'école philosophique musulmane*, Paris 1934, p. 213). In reality this contradiction seems to refer to a difference between his earlier and later philosophies.

³ The authorship of one of the logical works attributed to Al Fârâbî and extant in Latin has been the subject of such an investigation (see, *Isis*, vol. 24, 1935, p. 133). This seems to have been the first example of this nature. The most detailed study of this kind is perhaps that of Khalil Georr ("Fârâbî est-il l'auteur de Fuṣṭūḥ el hikam ?"), *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, 1941-46, p. 31-39). Richard Walzer has briefly expressed his doubts concerning the authorship of the book, attributed to Al Fârâbî also by some of our sources, wherein it is attempted to bring about a reconciliation between Plato and Aristotle ("The Rise of Islamic Philosophy", *Oriens*, vol. 3, 1950, No. 1, p. 16).

The little book entitled *Ithbât al mufâraḳât* may be added to this list. It has been published in Haydarabad (1345 H.), and handwritten copies of it exist in Istanbul libraries. Here too the work is attributed to Al Fârâbî, but our sources do not ascribe to him a book by this name. Moreover, Bayhaḳî mentions such a work but gives the name of its author as Abû 'Abdullâh al Ma'sûmî, a pupil of Ibn Sinâ (Bayhaḳî, *Tatimma siwân al hikma*, Lahore 1935, Arabic text, p. 189, 303), and according to Muḥammad Shâfî, the editor, this information finds confirmation in a Berlin MS. of which he quotes the first four sentences (*ibid.*, p. 95 and footnote). Judging by these, the Berlin MS. and those attributed to Al Fârâbî should be identical. There exists, on the other hand, the Hebrew translation (by Moses ben Tibbon) of a work attributed to Al Fârâbî (Carra de Vaux, *E. I.*, *ibid.*), and considering its contents, it appears very likely that it is a translation of *Ithbât al mufâraḳât*. If a closer scrutiny confirms this guess, the attribution of this work to Al Fârâbî will find a confirmation of a relatively early date.

The determination of apocryphal works may be based on a study of their contents, i.e., the ideas they contain, but in this case, such a determination may be accomplished with a sufficient amount of certainly only after gaining a reasonably clear idea of the chronological sequence of the works of the author in question. Al Fârâbî lived to be eighty years old, and it is very likely that his ideas developed and changed considerably in course of time, especially in view of the fact that, as we have seen, considerable divergences seem to have been detected between different works of Al Fârâbî already in medieval times. I have devoted some space in this article, therefore, to this question, and have attempted to establish certain tentative criteria for the study of the chronological order of the works of Al Fârâbî.

Certain works of Al Fârâbî contain records and other evidences which facilitate an initiation into such an investigation. His extant book on the "ideal state," is among his last works according to a note written in one of its manuscript copies,⁴ and perhaps also according to the statement in one of our bibliographic sources.⁵ Moreover, certain works of his consist of answers to questions asked from him and must, therefore, have been written after he had come to be considered a learned man and after he had become famous.⁶ It may be stated, in addition, that in general, these works are seen to be among those which may be characterized as containing more mature ideas, compared with other works attributed to him.

The works of Al Fârâbî which appear to contain more mature and clear-cut ideas are usually very concise ; they do not contain elaborate introductions and doxologies. Conversely, other works of his which contain doxographic phrases and which are not so pithy and concise in expression and style seem to be less mature from the

⁴ İstanbul, Şehid Ali Paşa Library, MS. No., 674, first page.

⁵ Ibn abî Uşaybi'a, *'Uyûn al anbâ fî tabaqât al a'ibbâ*, Bulak 1299, vol. 2, p. 138-39.

⁶ *Fimâ yaşihhu wa lâ yaşihhu min ahkâm al nujûm*, edited and translated by F. Dieterici among a collection of Al Fârâbî's works : *Alfârâbî's philosophische Abhandlungen*, Leiden, text, 1895, translation, 1900 (There is also a Cairo edition of the same collection of texts : 1907) ; *Masâ'il suila 'anhâ*. This latter work of Al Fârâbî has appeared in the above mentioned collections, and it has also been edited under the name *Masâ'il mutafarriqa* in Haydarâbâd (H. 1334).

view-point of the ideas they contain. On the basis of these considerations, the scientific works of Al Fârâbî should generally be considered among his earlier works. Some of the works attributed to Al Fârâbî, e. g., the *Fuṣūṣ al ḥikam* and the *Maḳâlât al raḥî'a*,⁷ on the other hand, are composed largely on the basis of the interpretation of certain verses of the Koran and certain Traditions of Muḥammed. These works may be apocryphal, but there are reasons to believe that they are among the earlier works of Al Fârâbî.

Our knowledge concerning Al Fârâbî's life consists of scattered bits of information which are sometimes vague and even contradictory. There is one item according to which Al Fârâbî started out as a judge, and it was during this period of his life that he chanced to come in touch with works of Aristotle; he studied them with fervor, and, according to this story, it was apparently after this that he decided to go to Bagdad and study philosophy in a systematic way. This story, set forth, in the light of additional evidence, as probably true in the above article, would make it likely that religion was one of the foundations upon which Al Fârâbî's philosophical speculation was based. Indeed, the general sequence of his works as conjecturally proposed here, also represent him as entering into philosophy from religion.⁸

A comparative study of Al Fârâbî's works reveals certain differences of terminology which may also serve as a basis for determining their chronological sequence. Finally, his views concerning the

⁷ According to Brockelmann (*Geschichte der arabischen Literatur*, vol. 1, 1943, p. 234, Suppl. I, p. 376) two MSS. of it exists. An edition of this text and its Turkish translation will be found in this number of *Belleten* (See, p. 81 ff.).

⁸ Some evidence to this effect has been adduced in the above summary. We may add the following items here.

In Al Fârâbî we meet the idea which establishes an identity between being and divine thought, and it is interesting to observe that a study of the *Maḳâlât al raḥî'a*, which may be one of the early works of Al Fârâbî, seems to contain the germ of this idea. If this claim is true, the origin of the Farabian idea in question is the phrase "kun fa yakûn," (God said, "Let there be", and there was...) which is repeated several times in the Kur'ân. (See, below, 112, 115, 116, 117 and footnote 91, 118, 119.)

The same work also contains a strong evidence to the effect that the Farabian explanation of the divine inspiration of the prophets may be traced to a well-known Tradition of the Prophet Muḥammed. (See below p. 109).

heavenly intellects seem to have evolved gradually. They are absent, or they exist only in a potential form, in his works tentatively accepted here as his earliest works. There are signs indicating that in the later periods of his life too, these ideas developed slowly, and that, in certain matters of detail at least, viz., in the determination of the number of these intellects and in their identification with the souls the planets, these ideas did not reach their finished form, seen, e. g., in his book on the "ideal state,,", until perhaps the last decade of his life. And in conclusion, it may be stated that some of the criteria proposed in this article seem to confirm one an other.