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Mašhad, Kitābhāna-i Āsitān-i Quds-i Raḍawī 300, f. 1v; Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, grec 1853, f. 186v

Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġdādī and the Traditions of Arabic Logic

Tony Street*

Abstract

In the anonymous *al-Nukat wa-l-fawā'id*, a summa of Avicennan philosophy written around 1200, a partisan of Avicenna accuses Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210) of having come under the influence of the reprehensible Leader of the Jews, Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġdādī (d. c. 1165). The reasons for the anonymous author's antipathy toward Abū l-Barakāt relate to the way Avicenna's contribution to logic is both pillaged and pilloried in stretches of *al-Kitāb al-mu'tabar*. The claim that Abū l-Barakāt exercised direct influence over Faḥr al-Dīn is, at least in logic, unlikely to be true. Nonetheless, Abū l-Barakāt's presentation and methods highlight significant changes in the methods of the later traditions of Arabic logic.

1 – Preliminaries

Nearly fifteen years ago, Yahya Michot directed scholarly attention to a fascinating text on Avicennan philosophy called *al-Nukat wa-l-fawā'id* (*Subtle Points and Useful Notes*).¹ As he argued, the text is of capital importance for understanding the fortunes of Avicenna's philosophical system through the twelfth century. Working in his wake, Ayman Shihadeh has gone on persuasively to locate the text's anonymous author in the Avicennan tradition around the turn of the thirteenth century, an unbroken tradition of commentary on Avicenna which, following Frank Griffel, I refer to as school Avicennism.² The author of *Subtle Points* is tortured

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¹ Y. Michot, "Al-Nukat wa-l-fawā'id: An Important Summa of Avicennian Falsafa", in P. Adamson (ed.), *Classical Arabic Philosophy: Sources and Reception*, Nino Aragno Editore, London – Torino 2007 (Warburg Institute Colloquia 11), pp. 90–124. The manuscript he discusses in the paper is MS Istanbul, Feyzullah Efendi 1217 (generally referred to in what follows as *Subtle Points*, and its author as the *Subtle* author); I am grateful to Ayman Shihadeh for supplying me with a copy.

² I include under this term al-Lawkarī (d. 1123), 'Umar al-Ḥayyām (d. 1126), Šaraf al-Zamān al-Īlāqī (d. 1141), and 'Umar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī (see n. 25 below); see A. Shihadeh, *Doubts on Avicenna: A Study and Edition of Sharaf al-Dīn al-Masūdī's Commentary on the Išārāt*, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2016 (Islamic Philosophy, Theology and Science 95), p. 7 ft. 5 (where he refers to "traditional Avicennism") and p. 8. By "school Avicennists", I do not mean to imply that these scholars were only passing on results achieved by their predecessors, or that they abandoned an active research program; I mean rather to highlight a tendency to pass over scholarly work from competitor traditions. Cf. F. Griffel, "Between Al-Ghazālī and Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġdādī: The Dialectical Turn in the Philosophy of Iraq and Iran During the 6th/12th Century", in P. Adamson (ed.), *In the Age of Averroes*, The Warburg Institute, London 2011, pp. 45–75, from p. 50.

by reactive worry about criticisms launched against Avicenna's doctrines, above all by the Leader of the Jews (*šayḥ al-yahūd*) and the Persian Humbug (*ḥašawī l-a'āğim*); the Humbug is described at points as a follower of the Leader of the Jews. Michot was able positively to identify these two revisionist enemies of school Avicennism as, respectively, Abū l-Barakāt al-Bağdādī (d. c. 1165) and Faḥr al-Din al-Rāzī (d. 1210). *Subtle Points* is a text that drips with polemic vitriol, most probably a testament to the death-throes of a tradition of commentary on Avicenna as it was being displaced by a new tradition, one which was to crystallize around the philosophical work of al-Rāzī.

The criticisms we find in *Subtle Points* raise a number of questions to do with Abū l-Barakāt and his objections to Avicenna (or to school Avicennism). What did he object to? Why? And what impact did these objections really have on al-Rāzī and those who were inducted into the tradition of Avicennan logic through al-Rāzī's teaching?³ In keeping with the project within which this study was conducted (the Reception and Impact of Aristotelian Logic in Medieval Jewish Culture), I focus my remarks on Abū l-Barakāt's reception of Aristotelian logic, a reception which he weaponizes in confronting aspects of what had already become the dominant tradition of logic in the eastern Islamic world of the twelfth-century, the Avicennan tradition. I deal specifically with three passages in Abū l-Barakāt's treatise on logic; the confrontation we see playing out in these passages helped to bring about a new attitude to Avicenna and the canon within which he should be read.

At points in logic where Avicenna – on Abū l-Barakāt's view – has gone most wrong, Abū l-Barakāt stresses the need to go back and consider the positions of Avicenna's greatest predecessor. The preface of Abū l-Barakāt's philosophical summa, *al-Kitāb al-mu'tabar*, gives Abū l-Barakāt's interventions between Avicenna and Aristotle full resonance, because it is here that he tells us why some philosophical positions have become so confused. I summarize crucial elements of the preface in the second section of this paper. This gives the context required for the third section, where I present the three passages from the treatise on logic in which Abū l-Barakāt contrasts Aristotle's claims with those of "a certain later scholar." The passages are directed against methods and attitudes that Abū l-Barakāt derides; in my concluding section I argue that, given the institutional context against which Abū l-Barakāt was writing, his target is the school Avicennists. I set out in four appendices, respectively, the preface of *al-Kitāb al-mu'tabar* in translation, the references to Abū l-Barakāt's logic that have been indexed in recent editions of works by al-Rāzī, Afḍal al-Dīn al-Ḥūnağī (d. 1248), Nağm al-Dīn al-Kātībī (d. 1277) and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1272), the references in *Subtle Points* to Abū l-Barakāt's logic, and finally, the references in *Subtle Points* to al-Rāzī's logic. I hope that the last three appendices assist further research on Abū l-Barakāt's impact on the traditions of Arabic logic.

And so to a few preliminaries to do with Abū l-Barakāt's life, and with the current state of research into his logic. It is a matter of dispute when Abū l-Barakāt was born, and where he worked through his life. I propose simply to follow the best evidence that has been found in the

³ Following al-'Allāmah al-Ḥillī's remark in his commentary on Nağm al-Dīn al-Kātībī's *Šamsiyyah*, I have incautiously referred to "the followers of Faḥr al-Dīn (*atbā' Faḥr al-Dīn*)", from al-Ḥasan ibn Yūsuf ibn al-Muṭahhar al-Ḥillī, *Al-Qawā'id al-ğaliyyah fī šarḥ al-risālah al-šamsiyyah*, ed. F.Ḥ. Tabrīziyān, Mu'assasat al-nashr al-Islāmī, Qum 1432 AH/2011, p. 183.4, taking the group to include al-Kātībī and Afḍal al-Dīn al-Ḥūnağī; I realize now that this collection of scholars is said to be a determinate group only by its detractors, and not the scholars themselves.

Arabic tradition.⁴ I work on the assumption that he was born around 1080 in a village near Mosul, and that he read *The Epitome on Medicine* for Nizām al-Mulk (*Kitāb al-Talḥīṣ al-Nizāmī*) with his teacher in medicine, Abū l-Ḥasan Saʿīd ibn Hibatallāh, in 1096 in Baghdad. The story goes that because Abū l-Barakāt was a Jew, it took some time to get Abū l-Ḥasan to accept him as a student. It may well be, then, that Abū l-Barakāt was already in Baghdad in 1095, when Abū Ḥāmid al-Ġazālī (d. 1111) – the renovator of religion (*muğaddid*) of the fifth Islamic century – published his book, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers* (*Tabāfut al-falāsifa*). Examining the *Incoherence* helps us understand what was in the air as Abū l-Barakāt formed his approach to philosophy, and I come back to it in section 4. He worked in the courts of a number of rulers, in Baghdad and further east, including in Yazd. It is agreed on all sides that Abū l-Barakāt converted from Judaism to Islam at some stage in his career, though different accounts are given of the time and circumstances of the conversion. He died some time around 1165.⁵

Abū l-Barakāt’s major and perhaps only contribution to logic is the long first section of his philosophical summa, *al-Kitāb al-muʿtabar*.⁶ His logic was portrayed by Nicholas Rescher as the beginning of a distinctly anti-Avicennan school of logic, the Western School.⁷ Referring to whatever reception Abū l-Barakāt enjoyed as a school is clearly to misrepresent the nature of his role in the Arabic traditions of logic. I hope to show in this paper that his impact had more to do with exemplifying the possibilities inherent in a new attitude to the Avicennan corpus. The most important result of modern research on Abū l-Barakāt from a philological perspective is by Jules Janssens, tracing parts of the logic section to its immediate Avicennan source.⁸ More will be added to the list of logical doctrines with Avicennan provenance through the course of this paper, though not in the textually precise terms given in Janssens’ work. Philosophically, the most importance recent study of Abū l-Barakāt’s syllogistic is by Wilfrid Hodges, setting out

⁴ A number of recent studies credit Abū l-Barakāt with a career in the West (including in Greece and perhaps even Italy), but the evidence is poor; for an evaluation, see F. Griffel, “Review, *Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī’s Scientific Philosophy. The Kitāb al-Muʿtabar*. By M.M. Pavlov. London and New York: Routledge, 2017”, *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 15 (2018), pp. 443-46, at pp. 443-444.

⁵ I take this overview from W. Madelung, “Abū l-Barakāt Baġdādī”, *Encyclopaedia Iranica* I/3 (London – New York, 1983/1996), pp. 266-268; cf. Sh. Pines, “Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġdādī”, *Encyclopaedia of Islam* 2nd edition, ed. H.A.R. Gibb et al., Brill, Leiden 1960–, pp. 1:111-113.

⁶ Henceforth *BM*, with following page and line numbers. I use the edition published in Hyderabad in 1357 AH; Yaltkaya procured the manuscripts for a collaborative edition by Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn al-Mūsawī, ʿAbdullāh b. Aḥmad al-ʿAlawī, Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Yamānī and Muḥammad ʿĀdil al-Quddīsī. I am grateful to Jari Kaukua for this information; the relevant source – which I cannot read – is T. Tunagöz, “Ebū l-Berakāt el-Baġdādī Üzerine Çalışmalar: Bir Kaynakça Denemesi”, *Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi* 17 (2017), pp. 187-225. I am grateful to Robert Wisnovsky for sending me a copy of Esad Efendi 1931. Note that Abū l-Barakāt refers to his book as *al-Kitāb al-muʿtabar*, with a definite article on the first word; it is the book as a whole which is considered (whether the book the reader holds, or the Primordial Book – *al-kitāb al-awwal*, see *Preface* §10 – Abū l-Barakāt checks it against), not just each claim. It must be admitted that Arabic authors take the title to be *Kitāb al-muʿtabar*, calling its author *ṣāhib al-muʿtabar*.

⁷ N. Rescher, *The Development of Arabic Logic*, Univ. of Pittsburgh Press, Pittsburgh 1964, pp. 57-8, 66-7, especially diagram on pp. 68, 169-70, and 183-5 (note that Rescher refers to Abū l-Barakāt as Ibn Malkā); subject to detailed criticism in T. Street, “Arabic Logic”, in J. Woods – D. Gabbay (eds.), *Greek, Arabic and Indian Logic*, North Holland, New York 2004, pp. 523-96, at 567-71 (criticism that needs to be revisited in light of material set out in this paper).

⁸ J. Janssens, “Abū al-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and His Use of Ibn Sīnā’s *al-Ḥikma al-ʿArūḍiyya* (or Another Work Closely Related to It) in the Logical Part of His *Kitāb al-Muʿtabar*”, *Nazariyyat* 3 (2016), pp. 1-22.

his procedures to accept the valid syllogisms and reject the invalid.⁹ Hodges provides evidence to hold that Abū l-Barakāt is an outstandingly original logician. His procedures were however noted by only one of the logicians mentioned in this paper (Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī; see the seventh and eighth points in appendix 2), which may serve to show that true innovation requires a school of disciples of unquestioning loyalty to guarantee reception.

2 – How To Do Philosophy in Fallen Times

The preface of *al-Kitāb al-mu‘tabar* was first translated into French by Pines, almost in its entirety, and supplied with useful notes; significant portions have since been translated into English.¹⁰ Drawing heavily on these earlier scholars, I offer a full translation in the first appendix for convenience of reference. The section which follows the end of the preface of *al-Kitāb al-mu‘tabar* introduces Abū l-Barakāt’s logic with its own prefatory remarks; I translate part of this preface to the logic at the end of this section.

Let me begin my account with an overview. The preface tells us about the way philosophy has been transmitted through its ages (§§2–4), then offers autobiographical reflections on Abū l-Barakāt’s own initiation in philosophy, and how this initiation culminated in the decision to write the summa (§§5–8); the preface concludes with an account of the structure and method of the summa (§§9–10). Pines rightly drew attention to how decisive Avicenna’s *Cure* is for the way Abū l-Barakāt writes, but it is easier to draw parallels for the preface of the treatise with al-Fārābī’s *On the Appearance of Philosophy*, at least in terms of broad structure: an account of the transmission of philosophy followed by the philosopher’s own initiation in the discipline.¹¹

I now consider the preface one section at a time. On the surface, §§2–4 present an account of philosophical praxis as it has changed from halcyon beginnings to a fallen age, though the account involves giving at the same time an assessment of the merits of oral instruction, free-standing treatises and traditions of commentary. Abū l-Barakāt acknowledges that philosophical texts suffer from being translated from one language to another, but otherwise makes no mention of Greek predecessors to the Arabic philosophical tradition until he comes to the logic section, where he mentions Aristotle by name. Nor does Abū l-Barakāt mention any of his Arabic predecessors. Set down without naming a single philosopher, §2 presents not so much a historical narrative as the timeless space of fable, or – given the longevity of these philosophers – a biblical past, the time of the antediluvian patriarchs. Its function is not to sharpen nostalgia, but to highlight the obstacles facing philosophical praxis these days: our lives are simply too short to master the disciplines of philosophy. Having in this way introduced the *ars longa topos*, §3 turns to the main problem which follows on the consequent breakdown in oral teaching and the need to write philosophy down – namely, the danger the unworthy pose to the proper study of philosophy – and the solution, which is to write philosophy using hidden pointers (*iṣārāt*) meant

⁹ W. Hodges, “Two Early Arabic Applications of Model-Theoretic Consequence”, *Logica Universalis* 12 (2018), pp. 37–54. The study shows how poor the Hyderabad edition is, at least for this part of the logic.

¹⁰ Sh. Pines, *Nouvelles études sur Awḥad al-Zamān Abu’l-Barakāt al-Baḡhdādī*, Durlacher, Paris 1955 (Société des études juives), pp. 8–13; cf. S. Stroumsa, “Compassion for Wisdom: The Attitude of Some Medieval Arab Philosophers towards the Codification of Philosophy”, *Bochumer Philosophisches Jahrbuch* 1 (1997), pp. 39–55, at 48–51; Griffel, “The Dialectical Turn” (above, n. 2), pp. 66–8.

¹¹ D. Gutas, “The ‘Alexander to Baghdad’ complex of narratives. A contribution to the study of philosophical and medical historiography among the Arabs”, *Documenti e studi sulla tradizione filosofica medievale* 10 (1999), pp. 155–93, see pp. 158–67.

to guard it from the unworthy.¹² §4 dwells on the ironic outcome of such a strategy: coded brevity entices many to try and decode the text, yet most who try are not up to the task. This transforms the task of the would-be philosopher in the third and most fallen age of philosophy from a first-order problem of decoding a few short texts to a second-order problem of sifting through and assessing the relative merits of many long texts written to decode the short texts. This is the task we find Abū l-Barakāt buried in at the beginning of the autobiographical section of the preface.

Abū l-Barakāt presents himself in §5 as finding his philosophy in these texts. On the face of it, he is an autodidact like Avicenna, though – unlike Avicenna – problems crop up for him across all the philosophical disciplines, and not just in metaphysics. Abū l-Barakāt is clear on the reasons he struggles to find traction among these many texts. The coded ones are too short, lack full proofs, and use phrasing that may have suffered from the vagaries of translation; the commentaries are prolix, their proofs may not conclude in the claim at issue, and their overall rigor is compromised by obscurity and lack of focus. In getting clear on basic concepts and the proofs for knowledge-claims, Abū l-Barakāt in §6 resorts to a source other than the books before him – not unlike Avicenna finding his knowledge from a direction other than the Greeks – and turns to consideration (*i'tibār*) of the Codex of Existence (*ṣaḥīfat al-wuḡūd*).¹³ §7 presents in a novel way the topos of being prevailed upon to write the summa. Abū l-Barakāt had already been writing aides-mémoire for himself as he worked through the many texts before him, and someone – perhaps the Prince 'Alā' al-Dawlah – had come across these, and asked that they be assembled into a book. Fearful of feeding yet further material to the unworthy (as in §4), Abū l-Barakāt resists the request, until his favorite student repeats it (as we find out in §8). Only then he writes *al-Kitāb al-mu'tabar*, *The Considered Book*, so called because the only material included in the book is that which he has considered and for which he has completed the speculation; the book is free from appeal to authority (unlike – to read polemic in the silences of the preface – the commentaries of the school Avicennists). I find it difficult to read §8 and not hear the voice of an infirm man supported by a generous student, the scribe and editor of the summa. I tend in consequence to think the summa is committed to writing late in Abū l-Barakāt's life, but this is speculation prompted by what is clearly an artful preface.

§9 sets out the structure of the summa: logic first (“the prosody of thought”), and then a treatment which, in phrases that recall the prologue to Avicenna's *Cure*, claims to have kept parallel with Aristotle's exposition of logic, and – in this surpassing Avicenna – also with his

¹² Given how closely Abū l-Barakāt follows al-Fārābī in the passages quoted in the next section, I assume that he was also acquainted with al-Fārābī's *Agreement Between Plato and Aristotle*, and the passage therein on the reasons for, and nature of, Aristotle's obscurity; translated and analyzed in D. Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition: Introduction to Reading Avicenna's Philosophical Works*. 2nd edition, Brill, Leiden – Boston 2014, pp. 259-60; see also footnote to §3 in *Appendix 1*. Abū l-Barakāt may recognize in §3 a higher value in Avicenna's *Pointers*, an exercise in pre-lapsarian coding of philosophy as *iṣārāt*. Abū l-Barakāt has similar worries about decline in sciences other than philosophy; see Stroumsa, “Compassion” (above, n. 10), 48 ft. 24, and 50.

¹³ Functionally, the role of considering (*i'tibār*) the Codex (*al-ṣaḥīfa*) is that of intuiting (*ḥads*) the way things are in themselves (*fī nafs al-amr*) in Avicenna, though whether the certainty of its outcome is justified by a complex psychodynamics, or is rather simply an appeal to common sense (as I suspect it is), is a matter for other parts of Abū l-Barakāt's philosophy to clarify. Griffel, “The Dialectical Turn” (above, n. 2), p. 68, takes *i'tibār* as a parallel for al-Gazālī's *iḡtibād* (and rejection of *taqlīd*); the parallel may be apposite, though I doubt Abū l-Barakāt had any interest in *kalām* (at least in logic). Pines translates it as “réflexion personnelle”; see also note to §6 of *Appendix 1*.

expositions of physics and metaphysics.¹⁴ In closing, Abū l-Barakāt reaffirms in §10 the most important characteristics of his book: the standards of proof he has followed, his resistance to appeals to authority, and the resort he has made to the way things are in themselves, through collating his work with the Primordial Book, the Codex of Existence.

No one could think the three ages of philosophy in the preface are intended mainly (or even at all) as history; they serve to rank genres of philosophical output. There is no doubt that for some purposes, Abū l-Barakāt treats Avicenna as one of the wrong-headed commentators in §4 (see Texts 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3 in the next section), and so it follows that he holds those who represent school Avicennism and comment on Avicenna to be even more wrong-headed. But in referring to books of pointers (*iṣārāt*) in §3, Abū l-Barakāt must have had Avicenna's *Pointers and Reminders* in mind, and thereby to allocate it to a less fallen age of philosophy. Abū l-Barakāt may be criticizing the school Avicennists for the further error of not yet focusing as much as they should on what he seems to regard as Avicenna's best work. But what matters most is that Abū l-Barakāt has implicitly put most of Avicenna's output in the third age, part of the vast body of work that must be carefully sifted, considered and assessed.

Before I consider three of those assessments, let me note Abū l-Barakāt's introduction to his logic section. He writes that students had no way of deciding among the competing claims of the philosophers

Text 2.1: (...) until Aristotle wrote on this a book with a number of parts which he called the Science of Logic; and in each part we find one of the disciplines treating the speculative, reflective and instructional aspects of what man conceives and asserts. The book was the most perfect for what is sought, and – for the goals intended – most comprehensive of everything that is relayed to us from the Ancients about the discipline (*BM* 5.17–20).

In other words, logic is unlike other disciplines in that it is received from only one among the Ancients; there is no need to collate and compare other views in logic in the way we need to collate views in physics and metaphysics. In logic, Aristotle is enough. All the more ironic, then, that Aristotle is so rarely called on in Abū l-Barakāt's logic.

3 – *The Choreography of Disrespect*

Three passages in *al-Kitāb al-mu'tabar* in which Abū l-Barakāt uses Aristotle against Avicenna are especially illuminating; they are choreographed to pit the old philosophical canon against the new Avicennist canon. I should immediately distinguish these corrections of Avicenna's doctrine from other corrections in which Aristotle is not invoked, like – to take one example early in the treatise – the evaluation of Avicenna's different formulations of the essential; this is touched on in point (3) of *Appendix* 3. I should also distinguish less confrontational mention of Aristotle (as for example in point (4) of *Appendix* 3). Such interventions may well be more common, and even more systematically significant, in the logic section of the treatise, but they seem to me to be less clearly connected to an older and regional dispute that – so I believe – Abū l-Barakāt is reactivating. Avicenna emerges from these passages brutalized and

¹⁴ The passage recalled is translated in Gutas, *Avicenna* (above, n. 12), pp. 45-6; cf. footnote to §9 in *Appendix* 1. Griffel, "The Dialectical Turn" (above, n. 2), pp. 65-6, notes that Abū l-Barakāt does not in fact keep his metaphysics so aligned.

rejected through comparison to Aristotle, not lightly bruised and emended. Each of the three passages comes after Abū l-Barakāt has accepted an element of Avicennan logic, but then goes on to correct its further development. The first has to do with signification, where Avicenna's simple-compound distinction is rejected; the second, with propositional analysis, where the interpretation of the absolute is rejected; and the third, with the division of syllogistic, the extensive development of one side of which is rejected.

In these passages, Abū l-Barakāt prefers Aristotle's doctrine over conflicting doctrine proposed by "someone", or "a certain later scholar." In every passage, Abū l-Barakāt sets out a doctrine which, taken literally, is either the account Aristotle puts forward somewhere in the *Organon*, or compatible with what Aristotle puts forward (or omits). Abū l-Barakāt did not begin the dispute. When dealing with the assertoric syllogistic in Aristotle, Avicenna actually connects the reading Abū l-Barakāt will come to defend with what "the Westerners" – which is to say, the Baḡdādīs – claim; so Abū l-Barakāt the Baḡdādī is defending the reading of the scholars of Baghdad.¹⁵ And there can be no doubt that the "someone" against whom Abū l-Barakāt defends these readings of Aristotle is Avicenna. It is curious that throughout the treatment of the logic, Avicenna's doctrine is presented without ascription (and none of Abū l-Barakāt's readers, whether anticipated or actual, would have needed such an explicit ascription). Were some ideal innocent to read the introduction to the logic section (Text 2.1 above), the natural understanding would be that the logic presented is Aristotelian, and that – at each of the three passages below – we have come to a point where an egregious outsider has formulated an alternative doctrine. But in fact, it is only when Abū l-Barakāt disagrees with a point in Avicenna's doctrine that he turns to Aristotle; from that moment, Avicenna no longer performs as Aristotle, and Aristotle – or perhaps al-Fārābī – takes over the role.¹⁶

The first passage I consider follows on a presentation of the Avicennan doctrine of signification. It has to do with the distinction between simple (*mufrad*) and compound (*murakkab*) expressions, the first of which is defined by Aristotle in the second chapter of the first book of *De Interpretatione* such that "no part of the simple noun signifies anything at all" (*al-ḡuz' min al-ismi l-basīṭ laysa yadullu 'alā šay' ašlan*), whereas the second, "the compound noun, is such that it belongs to its part to signify a thing, but not in isolation" (*wa-ammā l-ismu l-murakkab fa-min ša'ni l-ḡuz' minhu an yadulla 'alā šay' wa-lākin laysa 'alā l-infirād*). For Abū l-Barakāt, this means that there is a compound in the audible expression which relates in some

¹⁵ "How wretched is what the Westerners have done when they consider modality in the contradiction of necessary and possible propositions, yet do not do so for the absolute proposition, for being absolute is also one of the modalities... even if its modality is being devoid of the modalities of necessity and possibility, this absence [of alethic modalization] has a status"; *Mantiq al-Mašriqiyyīn*, ed. M.D. al-Khaṭīb – 'A.F. al-Qatlān, al-Maktaba al-salafiyya, Cairo 1910, p. 133.18-22. For Avicenna's attitude to the Westerners, see Gutas, *Avicenna* (above, n.12), p. 58, in a letter to Bahmanyār speaking about *Fair Judgment* (between Easterners and Westerners), and pp. 61-5 (Memoirs of a Disciple). To be clear, I am not claiming Abū l-Barakāt knew the specific texts of Avicenna's Period of Eastern Philosophy; I refer to them because they set out the regional dispute in its sharpest terms, though it is present in other texts.

¹⁶ This is a strange inflection of what Freudenthal and Zonta call "Avicennism without Avicenna"; G. Freudenthal – M. Zonta, "Avicenna among Medieval Jews. The Reception of Avicenna's Philosophical, Scientific and Medical Writings in Jewish Cultures, East and West", *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 22 (2012), pp. 217-87, although they may not have intended to include under their rubric someone who knows what Aristotle and Avicenna each wrote, and chooses to imply that Avicenna's doctrines are Aristotle's as a way of indicating acceptance of those doctrines. My examples add to the material they assemble at pp. 220-1. As they say, Abū l-Barakāt engages closely with Avicenna, but whatever synthesis results is subversive and not harmonizing.

way to a compound in the meaning (*wa-minhā murakkaba wa-hiya llatī yakūnu fī masmū‘ihā tarkīb yarġī‘u ilā tarkībi l-mafhūm*; *BM* 10.17–18), like “landlord” (*ṣāhib al-dār*). But there is another way that expressions are joined together, composition (*ta’līf*), and “landlord” is not an example of composition

Text 3.1: (...) even though the audible expression for [this meaning] has parts, each one of which expresses [a meaning] in isolation, yet they do not signify parts of the meaning signified by [the compound expression] (*fa-laysat hiya dālla ‘alā aġzā’ min mafhūmihi al-madlūl bibi ‘alaybi*); for “land” is not one of the two parts of the meaning [landlord], nor is [“landlord”] intended directly to signify [these parts]. A landlord is just a man who has the property of being related to something which is land, [and the property of being so related] is signified by and through [the audible component “land”]. Examples of this are understood by one who reflects a little and comes to a stable position (*‘inda man ta’ammala qalīlan wa-yataṭabbatu fī ta’ammulihī*), not like one who takes compound as composite and rejects Aristotle’s claim that ‘Abdallāh and ‘Abdašams are compound because—as is clear—they are not composite. He wore himself out over something no one disputes, which is that they are not composites; no one said this, but rather the claim is that they are compounds, and that remains incontrovertible. [*BM* 10.apu–11.5]

I stress again in passing that in all three passages I present, al-Fārābī is among Abū l-Barakāt’s predecessors, here, specifically in understanding Aristotle in *De Interpretatione* in the manner of Text 3.1.¹⁷ Further, I would draw attention to the fact that Avicenna’s definitions of *mufrad* (“the simple expression is that of which no part is intended to signify at all insofar as it is a part of [the expression]”) and *murakkab* (“the compound is what differs from the simple, and is called phrase”) in, for example, *Pointers* 1.8,¹⁸ are indeed in conflict with Aristotle’s definitions. What matters most for present purposes, however, is the criticism Abū l-Barakāt wants to press home, whether or not it is persuasive: Avicenna fails properly to reflect on Aristotle’s doctrine, in consequence he fails to see how solid it is; he needlessly changes the technical terms involved in stating the doctrine, and as a result he wastes his time arguing about a point no one is interested in contesting.¹⁹

The second passage I consider is devoted to the question of the absolute proposition (the *muṭlaqah*, the proposition with no modal operator). Avicenna had presented inferences from absolute propositions in *al-Naġāt* (for example) by contrasting a literal understanding of Aristotle’s claims – “the well-known account” (*al-mašhūr*) – with “the true account” (*al-ḥaqq*).²⁰ Abū l-Barakāt rejected Avicenna’s decision to take the absolute such that, among other

¹⁷ Al-Fārābī and a school commentator both seem to be making the same point as Abū l-Barakāt in commentary on *De Interpretatione* (F. Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī’s Commentary and Short Treatise on Aristotle’s ‘De interpretatione’*, p. 17, and p. 17 ft. 3), and would take ‘Abdalmalik the proper name as a compound.

¹⁸ Avicenna, *Kitāb al-ishārāt wa-l-tanbihāt: Le Livre des Théorèmes et des Avertissements*, publié d’après les mss. de Berlin, de Leyde et d’Oxford et traduit avec éclaircissements par J. Forget. Vol. 1, *Texte Arab*, Brill, Leiden 1892 (henceforth *AI*), p. 5.14 and 6.1.

¹⁹ In considering the range of components that can go to make up compound expressions, Abū l-Barakāt mentions the famous pre-Islamic poet-brigand Ta’abbāṭa Sharran, “he who puts evil under his arm” (more or less “Mr Dagger-at-the-ready”) as an example of a compound from a verb and a noun (*BM* 11.7-8); the example may or may not be original to Abū l-Barakāt, but I note it because it reveals him as a Jewish philosopher writing as an Arab for an Arabic audience.

²⁰ Avicenna, *al-Naġāt min al-ġarq fī baḥr al-dalālāt*, ed. M. Dānishpazhūh, Enteshārāt-e dāneshgāh, Tehran 1985, pp. 58.8, 58.10.

things, the universal negative proposition (“no horses are ravens”) will not convert (to “no ravens are horses”). Obviously, what is at issue is how one stipulates truth-conditions for the proposition, but Avicenna gave the following counter-example to the conversion of the universal negative: “no man is laughing.” This will not convert, he claimed, because although the first proposition can be true, its converse, “no laughing [thing] is a man” must be false; anything that laughs is a man. Avicenna has braided time-considerations into his truth-conditions for the absolute proposition, and is taking “no man is laughing” as “every man is at least once not laughing” (which does not convert to “every laughing is at least once not a man”); see Text A3.11 in Appendix 3 for the *Subtle* author’s confirmation that this is how to understand the universal negative. The proponent of this view – again, never named as Avicenna – is, according to Abū l-Barakāt, “someone who reasons about the negative [proposition] on the basis of the affirmative without having reflected (*wa-lam yata’ammal*) what taste and custom require with respect to expressions and the meaning of utterances (*mā yaqtadīhi l-dāwq wa-l-‘urf fī l-‘ibārāt wa-mafhūm al-alfāz*)” (*BM* 120.18-19); what he says in this regard is in accordance with his imprecise analysis (*bi-ḥasabi nazarihi ḡayri l-mustaḡṣā*) that the universal negative does not convert as a universal negative “as Aristotle said it does (*ka-mā qāla Aristūṭālīs*)” (*BM* 120.21). If you were to agree with this man of imprecise analysis, you would have to agree with him that “no man is laughing” is true just because each man is not laughing at some time. Abū l-Barakāt for one is not prepared to accept that this is a proper way to understand the proposition. Setting out a defense of Aristotle’s position on the conversion of the absolute, he fulminates to a conclusion:

Text 3.2: Reflect on these words [in defense of Aristotle], and how easily they are understood and conceived (*fa-ta’ammal al-kalām wa-mawḡi’ahu min al-fahm wa-l-ṭasawwur*); dispense with all they go on about, and ascertain the correctness of Aristotle’s doctrine in his extremely clear words that do without the subtleties used above. [*BM* 121.6-8]

Again, it is unnecessary complication that leads Avicenna astray, and simply reflecting on Aristotle’s position saves a reader from following Avicenna in error (particularly if that reflection is in light of linguistic custom guided by taste); this reflection culminates in a doctrine that can be clearly understood and conceived.

The third passage concerns the connective syllogism (*al-qiyās al-iqtirānī*). Abū l-Barakāt accepted the Avicennan division of the syllogistic into connective (*iqtirānī*) and repetitive (*istiṭnā’ī*). He also quantified and negated his hypothetical propositions in the manner initially laid down by Avicenna. He did not however adopt Avicenna’s method of explaining the reductio proof which relies on the distinction (*BM* 188.11-12). Nor did he follow Avicenna’s assumption that Aristotle had written on the hypothetical syllogistic in a lost treatise. So when Avicenna at one point regrets pointless exertion on the matter of the connective syllogism with hypothetical premises by people because “they have lost the work that Aristotle wrote detailing the hypothetical syllogistic”,²¹ Abū l-Barakāt would have felt no such regret. He belonged to the tradition skeptical of positing this lost Aristotelian treatment of the hypothetical syllogistic; in short, he followed a tradition represented more than two centuries before by al-Fārābī.²²

²¹ Avicenna, *Al-Šifā’: Al-Manṭiq: Al-Qiyās*, ed. S. Zāyid, al-Hay’ al-‘amma li-šū’ūn al-maṭābi’ al-amīriyya, Cairo 1964, p. 397.4-5.

²² And Avicenna is taking over a claim first made by Theophrastus, as the evidence in al-Fārābī shows: “But looking at [Aristotle’s] books on logic, we do not find that he wrote a separate work on hypothetical syllogisms. This

Text 3.3: Regarding syllogisms which are from hypothetical propositions, Aristotle only made mention of the repetitive (*al-istiṭna' iyyā*) in his book. What touches on connective [hypothetical] syllogisms, both pure, and mixed with categoricals, is clear from what he says, and the sound mind (*al-dihn al-salīm*) will recognize them from what has been said. He omitted mentioning them in his book either due to how little benefit they are in the sciences (*li-qillat fā'idatihā fi l-'ulūm*), and he disliked the thought of dwelling on them (*fa-kariha l-taṭwīl bi-hā*); or because he relied on the fact that minds which have come to know the categoricals may conclude from them to [the valid connective syllogisms with hypotheticals as premises], so that you will recognize them from what you have come to know in the categoricals; or [he omitted mention of them] for both [reasons]. A certain later scholar (*ba'd al-muta'abbirīn*) said that Aristotle had written a special book on them which had not been translated into Arabic; this is baseless conjecture (*taḥmīn lā ḥaḳīqata lahu*). Had [Aristotle] wanted to mention them, why did he move them from here, their proper place? Anyway, there is not enough concerning them that would merit a separate book with separate principles and conclusions. [*BM* 155.11-18]

Here, Abū l-Barakāt complains that Avicenna has failed to appreciate that the sound mind will grasp all that is useful in the hypothetical syllogistic from what has been said about the categorical syllogistic. (Reflecting on the material Avicenna presents, I can only imagine how much work “little benefit (...) in the sciences” is doing in the passage; it would be rare that the unaided mind, however sound it might be, could come to grasp all the deductions set out in Avicenna’s account, and Abū l-Barakāt must be assuming that most of these deductions are beneath investigation solely due to their lack of benefit.) Avicenna is pushed by his fervor for this useless and complicated system to baseless conjecture, attributing to Aristotle works he had no need to write.

Let us take stock. Abū l-Barakāt presents, without acknowledgment, characteristic elements of Avicenna’s logic; he arrogates this doctrine, seemingly as patrimony (or even *bona vacantia*) of the broader tradition. At points, after evaluating the doctrine against what Aristotle (and his faithful Baghdad disciples) actually held, Abū l-Barakāt discards equally characteristic Avicennan elements with harsh criticism of the needless complexities of “a certain later scholar.”²³ The knotted convolutions of this scholar are eliminated from the account, and the original Aristotelian doctrine restored. Bear this picture in mind: Abū l-Barakāt making occasional mention of a certain later scholar whose views are subject to arrogation, interrogation and abrogation. It is certainly the picture foremost in the minds of his readers among the school Avicennists.

4 – Abū l-Barakāt in Polemical Context

Clearly, Avicenna is the target of Abū l-Barakāt’s criticisms, but he cannot be the audience. Nor, I think, are kalām theologians like al-Ġazālī, who show no interest in Aristotelian texts and their excellence relative to the Avicennan texts. Al-Ġazālī does not seek to argue with philosophers, but to dissuade his younger colleagues from giving in to the temptations of

information is only found in the commentaries of the commentators, who relate it on the authority of Theophrastus” [Zimmermann, *Al-Fārābī’s Commentary* (above, n. 17), 45].

²³ Abū l-Barakāt uses different registers of respect in different contexts; at times he can refer to Avicenna as among *ba'd al-fuḍalā'*; noted in Shihadeh, *Doubts on Avicenna* (above, n. 2), p. 160.

philosophy. He dislikes the way the philosophers fling round what he refers to as high-sounding names, like Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato and Aristotle, and the way they ignore the legal requirements of religion, because (as he puts it) “imbecility is (...) nearer salvation than acumen severed [from religious belief]”;²⁴ he writes to refute “the ancient philosophers (*al-falāsifa al-qudamā*)”, to show the incoherence of their belief and the contradiction of their word in matters relating to metaphysics.” But they flounder about so badly, they disagree not only with sound reason but also with each other.

Text 4.1: Let us, then, restrict ourselves to showing the contradictions in the views of their leader, who is the philosopher par excellence and “the First Teacher.” For he has, as they claim, organized and refined their sciences, removed the redundant in their views, and selected what is closest to the principles of their capricious beliefs – namely, Aristotle [ĠT 4].

But actually,

Text 4.2: ...[T]he words of the translators of the words of Aristotle are not free from corruption and change, requiring exegesis and interpretation, so that this also has aroused conflict among them. The most reliable transmitters and verifiers among the philosophers in Islam are al-Fārābī and Avicenna. Let us, then, confine ourselves to refuting what these two have selected and deemed true of the doctrines of their leaders in error [ĠT 4-5].

Notice how al-Ġazālī has moved in a few lines from promising to refute the philosophy of the Ancients, to limiting his refutation to their leader Aristotle, and finally – to avoid the tedium of dealing with errors in translation – to focusing solely on al-Fārābī and Avicenna. This effective equation of al-Fārābī and Avicenna with the Ancients foreshadows what will become the canon soon after al-Rāzī, a canon distinct from those with which Abū l-Barakāt and the school Avicennists work.

The people Abū l-Barakāt is addressing, or – more precisely – seeking to insult and prevail over, are of course the commentators of what the preface to *al-Kitāb al-muṭabar* set out as representatives of the third age. They are the Avicennists like ‘Umar ibn Sahlān al-Sāwī and the school he represents,²⁵ a school that culminates in the *Subtle* author. Their attitude is hyperbolically illustrated by the author of *Subtle Points*. The highest praise his scribe can give him is as (to follow Michot’s translation) “the extreme point reached by the intellects, the resplendence of Avicenna (*maḥṣūl nihāyat al-‘uqūl sanā bn Sīnā*)”;²⁶ his students can admire a scholar who defends each point of Avicenna’s logic against all critics (see the third and fourth appendices below), attributing this logic to the most eminent of the later scholars (*afdāl al-muta’abhirīn*). He even defends Avicenna against other school Avicennist commentators, ruling out al-Sāwī’s claim that the two-sided absolute (the existential, *al-wuġūdiyya*) converts as a

²⁴ All quotes from Abū Ḥāmid Muḥammad ibn Muḥammad al-Ġazālī, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers = Tabāfut Al-Falāsifa: A Parallel English-Arabic Text*, translated by M.E. Marmura, Brigham Young U.P., Provo 2000 (henceforth *GT*).

²⁵ Al-Sāwī’s death date is unclear, and we are not helped by the dedication of his *al-Baṣā’ir al-naṣīriyya fī ‘ilm al-mantiq*, ed. Ḥasan al-Marāghī, Tehran, 1390 HŠ/2011 (henceforth *SB*), which could be to either a Naṣīr al-Dīn who came into office in 1127, or one who left in 1164; see Kh. El-Rouayheb, “Post-Avicennian Logicians on the Subject Matter of Logic”, *Arabic Sciences and Philosophy* 22 (2012), pp. 69-90, at p. 76 ft. 18.

²⁶ Michot, “*Al-Nukat*” (above, n. 1), p. 99; cf. Feyzullah Efendi 1217 incipit.

two-sided absolute.²⁷ The author of *Subtle Points* does not – on my limited reading – push even a little beyond Avicenna’s findings. It is enough to refer to Avicenna and to defer to Avicenna; he seems to have no desire to differ from Avicenna.

Whereas in *Subtle Points*, I can find only reference to Avicenna and deference to – indeed, reverence for – his doctrines, in Abū l-Barakāt’s antagonist and contemporary al-Sāwī there are moments of reference, deference and difference, exemplifying creativity within the bounds of courtesy and canon.²⁸ The most eminent of those who came after – but “after” in time only (*zamānan*) – may see the truth of things too easily, may slide into loose definitions, may have worries about engendering confusion in the weaker minds among his audience, may even slip up occasionally. Room is thereby left for the keen and thoughtful disciple to tighten expositions and explore deliberately neglected areas. But reference to Avicenna is under the title “the most eminent of the later scholars (*afḍal al-muta’abhirīn*).” The phrase not only pays homage to the scale of Avicenna’s achievement, but serves to remind those who have read *The Cure* of his own courtesy in the way that he would refer to al-Fārābī, as “the eminent later scholar (*al-fāḍil min al-muta’abhirīn*).” It also reminds those acquainted with theological literature – presumably everyone reading al-Sāwī and Abū l-Barakāt – of the genre of *afḍaliyya*, the debates about the relative superiority of kinds and individuals within a broad group. I am most familiar with the discussions about God’s messengers – the angels and the prophets – and which were superior to the other,²⁹ but similar debates concerned leaders (imams and prophets). Referring to Avicenna as *afḍal al-muta’abhirīn* (e.g. *SB* 299.1) calls these league tables to mind, forcing the reader to consider two hierarchies of philosophers, one led by Aristotle, the other by Avicenna. The phrase is occasionally qualified by “in time (*zamānan*)”, which raises the possibility that the later of the two hierarchies is ultimately the superior. This is the context against which we need to measure the offense given by Abū l-Barakāt’s “a certain later scholar (*ba’d al-muta’abhirīn*)”: the most that marks this scholar out, to the extent anything does, is where he comes temporally in the scheme of things.

Al-Sāwī does not mention Abū l-Barakāt by name,³⁰ but it is easy to see in his *al-Baṣā’ir al-naṣīriyya* (*Insights for Naṣīr al-Dīn*) a few coded yet barbed phrases directed against Abū l-Barakāt and the claims implicit in his preface. Al-Sāwī states that only those who really have read the ancients (like al-Sāwī, or so we are meant to conclude), and who really have contemplated their competing claims, will be able to recognize the value of his own book *al-Baṣā’ir*:

Text 4.3: No one will recognize the value of this book who has not dedicated time to investigate the books of our predecessors (*kutub al-mutaqaddimīn*) with the proper attitude of reflection (*bi-‘ayn al-ta’ammul*); on going through it, he will find clarification of what they ignored, elaboration of

²⁷ Michot, “*Al-Nukat*” (above, n. 1), p. 106; cf. Feyzullah Efendi 1217, 38r.5–6; that said, since the author of *Subtle Points* has a counterexample against al-Sāwī’s claim at 37v.u–38r.3, I suppose this is not so much a defense of Avicenna as of common sense.

²⁸ I am desperately under-theorized on canon-studies, but it seems to me that they might help analyze the dynamics at work on the margins of post-Avicennan philosophy. See G. Pollock, *Differencing the Canon: Feminist Desire and the Writing of Art’s Histories*, Routledge, London – New York 1999, p. 4.

²⁹ Al-Rāzī is more active as a contributor to the genre than most; see for one example *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāt al-‘Arabī, Beirut 1980, vol. 2, pp. 215–35.

³⁰ At least, not as far as I can see in *SB*. By contrast, al-Sāwī precedes the *Subtle* author in referring to Abū l-Barakāt as *ṣayb al-yahūd* in *Risālat nahḡ al-taqdīs*, in al-Sāwī, *Risālat nahḡ al-taqdīs wa-as’ila wa-aḡwiba*, ed. Ḥasan al-Marāghī, Tehran 2001, p. 31.5–6; I am grateful to Ayman Shihadeh both for making me aware of the reference and for providing me with a copy of the text.

what they treated in general terms, and notification of points of error which the student should be concerned to understand fully (...) [SB 51.9-12].-

Specifically on the question of conversion (see Text 3.2 above, relevant material given in point (7) of Appendix 3), al-Sāwī goes back over Avicenna's arguments against the widely-accepted account (SB 223); only someone who has failed properly to contemplate the counterargument of the most eminent of the later scholars could cling to that discredited account. (Equally important for showing the vitality of school Avicennism were al-Sāwī's challenges to Avicenna; I leave these to one side here, though I note a phrase which illustrates an attitude of deference immediately prior to differing from a disputed move by Avicenna: "we have worked out a justification for [Avicenna] (*tamaḥḥalnā labu 'uḍran*)" [SB 229.6].)

Abū l-Barakāt must have known that everyone would recognize that Avicenna's exposition of logic underlay his own exposition, at many points being adopted by Abū l-Barakāt word for word. Certainly no school Avicennist would have been in a moment's doubt. In this context, relegating Avicenna to a status in which he is followed but not referred to, what deference there might have been in silent arrogation is rudely withdrawn by comparing his methods at points to Aristotle's clarity, a clarity which on careful reflection invites acceptance. If there is a gambit here, it is – as said before – arrogation, interrogation and abrogation. Arguments from silence are dangerous, but by his methods in these passages, Abū l-Barakāt seems either to imply that Avicenna has committed some solecism for which condign treatment involves acknowledgment only of his errors, or to believe that the school Avicennists can only be set in their proper place by egregious insult of their revered leader.

5 – *Concluding Remarks*

In assessing the impact Abū l-Barakāt may have had on the main later tradition of logic in the Islamic world, his focus on Aristotle is a crucial consideration. Abū l-Barakāt is still working – and encouraging others to work – between two systems of logic, the Aristotelian and the Avicennan. Al-Rāzī refers to Aristotle rarely, and for no points of substance; those who began their logic by studying al-Rāzī's works mention Aristotle as rarely. Their work is directed to correcting and modifying Avicenna, but they make no claim against Avicenna that has been recovered from Aristotle; they work wholly within the Avicennan system. The most that can be said from the material gathered in the last three appendices to this paper is that al-Rāzī may have drawn ideas from Abū l-Barakāt in presenting the relation of universals to their particulars, and may have sympathized with his dismissive remarks about Avicenna's development of syllogisms with hypothetical premises, but otherwise noted Abū l-Barakāt's position only to disagree with it.³¹ The one point in al-Ḥūnaḡī over and above those we find noted explicitly in al-Rāzī has to do with Abū l-Barakāt's critique of Avicenna's doctrine on contraposition; it seems to me that Abū l-Barakāt exercises influence in this matter.

What we can say beyond this is that Abū l-Barakāt was a factor in al-Rāzī's philosophical deliberations and praxis. On the one hand, he served as a paradigm: he represented a critical approach to Avicenna's logic, apart from the school Avicennists, but with a control over the material transcending al-Ġazālī's technical imprecision. From this perspective, he is worthy of citation, even if none of his claims is accepted. More importantly, Abū l-Barakāt was a

³¹ See (1) and (5) in Appendix 2.

factor as al-Rāzī and his students thought about the appropriate way to frame and address the canon of authorities presiding over their work. Ayman Shihadeh has written recently on the need to “redress the orphaned status” of the major authorities in the canon by recovering the minor works over which they tower.³² It is equally important that we understand the changing periodization assumed by the scholars appealing to – or challenging – the authority of these major works. Both Abū l-Barakāt and the school Avicennists agree in referring to Avicenna as a later scholar (*muta’abbir*), even though – at least in the logic – they disagree over whether he is just one among many later scholars, or the best of them all. Al-Rāzī moves some distance from the terms in which the squabble between Abū l-Barakāt and the school Avicennists was conducted, tending to refer to Avicenna most of the time as the *Šayḥ*. But his student al-Ḥūnaḡī has moved even further; when he attributes a doctrine to the Ancients, it is often Avicenna’s.³³ Al-Ḥillī and al-Ṭūsī adopt the same implicit periodization.³⁴ The claim that Avicenna is one of the Ancients moves him into a pantheon inhabited by Aristotle. But it also entails that Arabic scholars have access to foundational classics without having to rely on translated texts, which is to say, texts produced through the Baghdad project. Perhaps this further claim was left implicit, but certainly scholars acted as though it were true.

In terms of Abū l-Barakāt’s attitude to the tradition of Arabic logic as his contemporaries worked on it, he is worried by its increasing tendency to focus on works composed in Arabic by his immediate predecessors. He shows in the texts presented in section 3 above that it is not sound practice to limit the range of reference so narrowly. Nor is it good to ignore the Greek provenance of the discipline. Philosophy began in the Islamicate world as the study of a foreign tradition translated through cooperative work within a network of scholars from different faith communities; this is the most promising environment for its study. The story of Abū l-Ḥasan’s reluctance to teach philosophy to a Jew is, if true, an example of the exclusion of non-Muslims from the study circle; and al-Ġazālī’s decision to avoid the corrupted formulation of doctrine involved in studying the translations of Aristotle is an example of preferring texts composed in Arabic. Abū l-Barakāt is witnessing – and, I believe, recognizing and resisting – the beginnings of what became the transformation of his life’s solace into a discipline taught in Muslim religious colleges, without serious attention to Greek antecedents.³⁵

In conclusion, Aristotelian logic matters to Abū l-Barakāt because it provides him with material against which to assess and criticize the substance and methods of Avicennan logic, and terms with which to condemn those of his contemporaries who ignore the achievements of the Baghdad Peripatetics. Looking back on the period of the reception and first study of Aristotelian logic provides Abū l-Barakāt with a model for how a community should go about its philosophical activities, a model which, for all its intrinsic problems, comes from an age less fallen than the one in which he finds himself.

³² Shihadeh, *Doubts on Avicenna* (above. n. 2), p. 1. *Subtle Points* is a perfect example of the kind of minor work which gives context and contrast to the scale of achievement in the major works (of which *al-Kitāb al-mu’tabar* is a clear example).

³³ E.g. *ḤK* 134.8-12, 145.3.

³⁴ *HQ* 306.2-4, 315.9-12, 316.2-4, 316.14-17, 356.5-8 (among many possible examples); Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, *Ḥall muškilāt al-iṣārāt*, ed. S. Dunyā, Dār al-ma’ārif, Cairo 1971, p. 152.8; I think Ṭūsī is less prone to this usage, and both will at least occasionally use “ancients” (*al-qudamā*) to refer to pre-Avicennan logicians.

³⁵ See G. Endress, “Reading Avicenna in the Madrasa: Intellectual Genealogies and Chains of Transmission of Philosophy and the Sciences in the Islamic East”, in J. Montgomery (ed.), *Arabic Theology, Arabic Philosophy: From the Many to the One: Essays in Celebration of Richard M. Frank*, Peeters, Louvain 2006, pp. 371-422, from p. 392.

Appendix 1: The Preface

1. After praise for God in accordance with the best of His blessings for which He is praised, and thanks to God in accordance with the most complete and perfect of His benefits for which He is thanked:

2. I say, then, in opening this book of mine, that the custom of learned philosophers among the Ancients (*‘ādat al-qudamā’ min al-‘ulamā’ al-ḥukamā’*) used to consist in teaching by oral instruction and direct relation, not through writing and public lectures, to those who learned from them and transmitted these sciences. Thus these teachers would set out and mention the knowledge they taught to learners and seekers who were fit to learn it, at the time they were fit to learn it, in phrasing appropriate to their understanding and the level they had reached in prior knowledge and experience. So the knowledge [of the Ancients] would not come to those unworthy of it, nor to those worthy but unready, nor in a way inappropriate to their knowledge, experience, intelligence and insight. Moreover, the scholars and students in those days were numerous and long-lived, transmitting the sciences from one generation to another in their entirety and in a state of perfect completion; in consequence, no part of the sciences was lost or forgotten, nor did they fall into the hands of the unworthy. [3]

3. When, however, the number of scholars and students dwindled, lifespans grew shorter and vocations less serious, and many of the sciences were effaced due to how few learners there were to transmit them; [when these problems arose,] scholars began to codify and compose books to preserve the sciences in them, and by them to transmit these sciences from the worthy to those in different times and far-flung places also worthy of this knowledge. In many of these books the scholars used obscure phrasing and hidden pointers (*al-ḥafī min al-iṣārāt*) which those possessed of insight could understand, and those gifted among the people of knowledge could experience; this guarded the sciences for them and against the unworthy.³⁶

4. As one generation after another saw the quality and number of scholars continue to dwindle, the later scholars (*al-muta’abḥirūn*) began to comment on difficult passages and clarify the obscure, opening each out and giving details, repetition and expansion. Thus it was that books and writings grew numerous, and many of the unworthy joined the worthy in this, and the words of competent and eminent scholars were mixed with the words of the incompetent and ignorant.

5. When destiny led me to engage in the philosophical sciences by reading the books about them transmitted from our predecessors (*al-mutaqaddimīn*) and the exegeses, commentaries and compositions on them by the later scholars (*al-muta’abḥirūn*), I used to read a great deal and dwell on them at length, yet I got from this [activity only] a little science. On the one hand, this is because it is difficult to understand much of what the Ancients (*al-qudamā’*) wrote due to its brevity, its lack of [explicit] determination and validation, and the loose phrasing which results from being translated from one language to another. On the other hand, it is difficult to understand the discourse of the later scholars because it is prolix, and their proofs are remote from what is to be proved, as are their arguments from what is being argued; and because verified commentary and explanation is wanting in many places, due either to obscurity or lack of focus. In short, understanding is difficult due to the manner of expression and commentary, and [coming to] knowledge is difficult due to the manner of proof and explanation.

6. So I labored in thought and speculation to determine and understand meanings, and to determine and verify sciences. [The outcome] would agree with some view a certain [Ancient] held, and differ from something else another held (*li-ba’d min al-qudamā’*); that on which nothing had been said or transmitted would be obtained by speculation, drawing from the Codex of Existence (*ṣaḥīfat al-wuġūd*).³⁷

³⁶ Given how close Abū l-Barakāt is to al-Fārābī’s position in the passages quoted above in this paper, it is safe to assume he was acquainted with al-Fārābī’s *Agreement Between Plato and Aristotle* (translated and analyzed in Gutas, *Avicenna* [above, n. 12], pp. 259-60), and the reasons for, and nature of, Aristotle’s obscurity. (Abū l-Barakāt makes no mention in his account of Plato’s use of symbols in the second (written) stage of his teaching.) I take *iṣārāt* here to be an evocation of the pointer-method of instruction: see Gutas, *Avicenna* (above, n. 12), pp. 346-50, especially at p. 347.

³⁷ Pines, *Nouvelles études* (above, n. 10), p. 10 ft. 1 and 2 offers justification for taking *ṣaḥīfa* as “codex”, and broader context to translate *ṣaḥīfat al-wuġūd*; both he and Stroumsa, “Compassion” (above, n. 10), p. 49 ft. 26 go so far as to equate it with “the Book of Nature”, which seems a stretch to me.

7. None of this was regulated in memory, but depended on sheets I had gathered for revision and validation.³⁸ Then someone came to know of these sheets who wanted me to finalize a draft of them.³⁹ But I held back lest they fall into the hands of the unworthy who would receive or reject their contents, or some of it, through ignorance and failure to reflect. [4] But when those sheets became so many, and the sciences validated in them unbearable to lose, and moreover there were repeated requests from those to whom I was obliged to acquiesce, I at last responded by composing this book on the philosophical sciences of existence, physics and metaphysics. I called it *The Considered Book* (*al-kitāb al-mu'tabar*),⁴⁰ because I put in it those things which I had come to understand, which I had considered and for which I had verified and completed the speculation; I did not transmit anything without understanding, nor anything I had understood and received but without speculation and consideration. In those things I have relied upon in this book, I have not gone along with views and doctrines of the great just because of their standing, nor have I differed from the lowly because of their insignificance. Truth in [speculation] has been the goal, and agreement or disagreement about it is just accidental.

8. Overwhelmingly my response to [the request to write this book] has been directed to my leading and most venerable student,⁴¹ who served as the book's scribe, taking it in dictation, who went through all its teachings and reviewed its scientific claims, until it was made complete and reached its end through his teaching and verification while taking my dictation.

9. I have prefaced those existential sciences I have put in the book with a statement of the logical sciences, of which it is said that they are the canons for speculation, the prosody of thought. In the ordering of the parts—the treatises, the questions, and the theorems—, I have kept in parallel with (*ih̄tadaytu... had̄wa*) Aristotle in his logical, physical and metaphysical works.⁴²

10. For every question I have stated the views of philosophers who come to considered judgments (*ārā' al-mu'tabirīn min al-ḥukamā'*),⁴³ and appended those other views that need to be stated. I have set down proofs and arguments as a function of speculation—what is to be stated in them, what is to be left out—then gone deeply into consideration [of relevant factors]. In all of them I relied on what preponderated in the scales of thought, prevailed and was confirmed by proof and demonstration, and I rejected what was less than this, whatever it might be (*kā'inan mā kāna*), and from whomever it may derive (*wa-mimman kāna*); such will be apparent to whoever reflects through study, scrutiny and review, and sees the excuse [for what I hold] through explanation (*'udrī fī l-bayān*), the evidence for it through argument (*ḥuḡḡātī fī l-ḥuḡḡa*) and the proof for it through demonstration (*burhānī fī l-burhān*). I have correlated all of this with the Primordial Book and the First Codex; if the book is transferred from both of these it hits the mark, if it correlates with them it is correct.

³⁸ I note Stroumsa's helpful characterization of the notes made by Abū l-Barakāt as *pensées*, which are (only vaguely) reminiscent of Avicenna's file cards (there is no indication that the notes amount to complete arguments for new doctrine); see Gutas, *Avicenna* (above, n. 12), pp. 16-17.

³⁹ Pines, *Nouvelles études* (above, n. 10), p. 10 ft. 3 records a marginal note in a manuscript identifying this person as 'Alā' al-Dawla, the philosopher-prince of Rayy, presumably the Kākūyid Ālā' al-Dawlah Farāmarz ibn 'Alī ibn Farāmarz, prince of Yazd (fl. 1121), who defended Abū l-Barakāt against 'Umar al-Ḥayyām's dismissive attacks cf. Pines, "Abū 'l-Barakāt", *EP*, 1: 113; Shihadeh, *Doubts on Avicenna* [above, n. 2], pp. 8, 11.

⁴⁰ Abū l-Barakāt refers to his book as *The Considered Book*, though even by the time of the author of *Subtle Points*, it is clear that it was referred to by others as *Kitāb al-Mu'tabar* (and so al-Kātibī refers to Abū l-Barakāt as *ṣāḥib al-mu'tabar*). But his collation of the book with *The Book of Existence* (see §14 below) suggests that the title has a secondary evocation, *The (Higher) Book Considered*.

⁴¹ See the long but inconclusive consideration of the student's identity in Pines, *Nouvelles études* (above, n. 10), p. 12 ft. 2.

⁴² Compare Avicenna's *Prologue* to the *Cure* (Gutas, *Avicenna* [above, n. 12], pp. 45-6), though Abū l-Barakāt claims to succeed in keeping in line with Aristotle's *Physics* and *Metaphysics* whereas Avicenna fails (or does not care); ft. 14 above. Compare also the Arabic phrasing with Avicenna's "I strove to have it run parallel (*taḥarraytu an uḥādiya*)"; Avicenna, *Al-Šifā': Al-Manṭiq: Al-Madḥal*, ed. G.C. Anawati – M.M. al-Khudayrī – A.F. al-Ahwānī, al-Maṭba'a al-amīriyya, Cairo 1952, p. 11.1. The extent to which Abū l-Barakāt keeps parallel with Avicenna is considered by Pines, *Nouvelles études* (above, n. 10), p. 11 ft. 1, and Griffel, "The Dialectical Turn" (above, n. 2), pp. 65-6. For what it's worth, I think we should understand the line in §7 above as "the philosophical sciences of existence, [that is,] physics and metaphysics".

⁴³ I follow Pines here (and Griffel), though had I translated this phrase without a crib I would have read it *mu'tabarīn*; Abū l-Barakāt is about to stress that relative standing among philosophers did not decide which one he followed. But I refer to Pines, and I defer to Pines.

Appendix 2: Abū l-Barakāt's Logic in the Thirteenth Century

The ever-increasing pool of editions of thirteenth-century logical texts written in Arabic is providing more material with which to study the reception of Abū l-Barakāt's logic and, through their indices and notes, making it easier to find references to those of his doctrines that were debated. From these materials, it is clear that Abū l-Barakāt's views are respectfully considered at various points in work by Faḥr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (to be precise, late twelfth century, except for his commentary on *ʿUyūn al-Hikma*, but an honorary thirteenth-century logician for present purposes) and that of his so-called followers, Afḍal al-Dīn al-Ḥūnaḡī (d. 1248) and Naḡm al-Dīn al-Kātibī (d. 1277); Abū l-Barakāt is quoted more often than Aristotle and al-Fārābī taken together.⁴⁴ This is a tradition in which views are often adopted silently, so explicit quotation may well understate impact; I have noted plausible editorial speculation as to Abū l-Barakāt's influence on the first and second points below. I end this appendix with a reference to material in Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī's *Asās al-iqtibās* provided to me by Mohammad Saleh Zarepour; al-Ṭūsī's reception of Abū l-Barakāt's logic is exceptional when considered against what al-Rāzī and al-Ḥūnaḡī take from his work, and certainly merits a separate study.

I take material from al-Rāzī first, and in the order we find it in the *Mulabḡaṣ*. Before coming to content, let me note that in his preface, al-Rāzī evokes even more than al-Sāwī did in Text 4.3 themes in Abū l-Barakāt's *Preface*; he says that

Text A2.1: (...) this book of ours includes an epitome of discussions of scholars who came before us (*al-mutaqaddimīn*) and a treatise of the opinions of the Ancients (*al-awwalīn*), along with precious additions of our own; if [these additions] are neither more glorious nor greater than what [the earlier scholars] have mentioned, nor are they lesser or more lowly, having been considered against the scale of sound debate and correct investigation (*mu'tabara bi-mi'yār al-baḡṭ al-salīm wa-l-naẓar al-mustaqīm*). [RM 3.apu–u]

(1) In his notes on the *Mulabḡaṣ*, Qarāmalakī makes the plausible suggestion (page 368) that al-Rāzī may be inspired in his example (RM 25.u) for a universal which can – metaphysically – be instantiated but which is not (or is not known to be), wall of ruby (*ḡā'it min yāqūt*), by Abū l-Barakāt's mountain of gold (BM 18.10–14); see also (2) in Appendix 3.

(2) Abū l-Barakāt's definitions of genus (“it is the more general of the two predicates said in answer to ‘what is it?’, or it is what is said in answer to ‘what is it?’ of universals which differ in essential qualities”, BM 16.pu–u) are noted among several other definitions treated as equivalent (RM 60.3–5).

(3) Al-Rāzī quotes Abū l-Barakāt (RM 88.6–u) on the denominative (*muštaqqa*);⁴⁵ Abū l-Barakāt argues against the claim that whiteness is not predicable:

Text A2.2: (...) the meaning of ‘white’ (*abyaḍ*) is ‘possessor of whiteness’ (*ḡū l-bayāḍ*), so the expression ‘possessor’ is for the relation [between the substrate and the quality] and what is really predicated is whiteness; if this is the case, then ‘white’ is not only a predicate, but rather an expression signifying the essence of the predicate (*ḡāt al-maḡmūl*) and the relation, so the predicate is in reality whiteness. [RM 88.6–u; cf. BM 21.17–22 at 22.1, 22.4]

Al-Rāzī dismisses the matter by saying, “Know that this discussion is [merely] to do with expression (*lafẓī*)”.

(4) Against Avicenna's famous despair at the possibility of constructing definitions (for example, in the opening passage of *Kitāb al-ḡudūd*), Abū l-Barakāt objected on the contrary that

⁴⁴ I rely on the notes and indices of the recent editions of al-Rāzī, *Manṭiq al-Mulabḡaṣ*, ed. A.F. Qarāmalikī – A. Aṣḡharīnīzhād, Dāneshgāh-e šāde, Tehran 2002, henceforth *RM*, and al-Ḥūnaḡī, *Kasbf al-asrār ʿan ḡawāmiḍ al-afkār*, ed. K. El-Rouayheb, Iranian Institute of Philosophy and the Institute of Islamic Studies, Free University of Berlin, Tehran 2010, henceforth *HK*.

⁴⁵ In the present paper, I continue with the practice of translating *muštaqqa* as “denominative”, because it works for the example I consider here. Dustin Klinger has however made it clear to me that *muštaqqa* is a broader term, including among other things the specific difference. In future I will adopt “derivate”.

Text A2.3: (...) this is extremely easy, because definitions are definitions of names, and names are names for intelligible matters (*asmā' li-l-umūr al-ma'qūla*); yet for every intelligible matter it must inevitably be intellected which thing is the whole shared part and which thing is the whole distinguishing part; so from this perspective definition is easy (*RM* 118.3-7).⁴⁶

As al-Rāzī remarks, “to be fair, if what is intended by definition is setting out the details of what is signified by the name (*maddūl al-ism*)”, Abū l-Barakāt is right; but he is wrong if what is intended by definition is grasping a conception of existing quiddities.

(5) Qarāmalakī points out (page 441) a matter on which Abū l-Barakāt and al-Rāzī agree, and – given that we know al-Rāzī was reading Abū l-Barakāt—on which al-Rāzī must have felt confirmed in his opinion: the hypothetical syllogistic. After setting out its divisions in his commentary on *‘Uyūn al-ḥikma*, al-Rāzī goes on:

Text A2.4: The fundamental principle in this section is the categoricals, especially since we have already explained that there is no difference between categorical and hypothetical propositions beyond the way they are expressed (*illā fi muğarrad al-‘ibāra*). For this reason Aristotle did not speak of these hypothetical syllogisms, nor did he accord them any weight. Avicenna claimed that Aristotle had devoted a book to them, except that it got lost and was not translated into Arabic; Avicenna moreover claimed that he devoted himself to extracting [these syllogisms] (*bi-stiḥrāḡihā*). But the likelier supposition is that Aristotle knew that the only difference between hypothetical and categorical propositions was just in expression, and therefore neither turned to deal with them nor accorded them any weight at all.⁴⁷

I turn to al-Ḥūnaḡī next, who, like al-Rāzī, first dismissively refers to Abū l-Barakāt with respect to (3) above as “he who objected [to Avicenna’s view of denominative predication] imagining that the *dū* is for relation and is extrinsic to the predicate, so the predicate in reality ‘whiteness,’ has missed the mark” (*HK* 24.pu–u). Second, he refers to Abū l-Barakāt by name when dealing with (4) above, definition, saying—as al-Rāzī had said before him – that “the view of Abū l-Barakāt that knowledge in relation to intellected meanings is easy for us insofar as we have already intellected them, and insofar as they are named by expressions in accordance with our [agreed linguistic] imposition, does not contradict [Avicenna’s] claim” about the difficulty of reaching a satisfactory real definition (*HK* 60.5–6).

(6) Al-Ḥūnaḡī mentions the contrapositive put forward by “the author of *al-Mu‘tabar* (*ṣāḡib al-mu‘tabar*)” in place of Avicenna’s, as al-Ḥūnaḡī prepares to set out his own alternative, more tightly-worded doctrine (*HK* 146.13-14, referring to *BM* 122.10-16).

The fourth and last (indexed) mention of Abū l-Barakāt by al-Ḥūnaḡī (which goes to (5) above) is particularly noteworthy given the concern of this paper, that is, the reception of pristine Aristotelian logic as combative alternative to Avicenna’s logic (see Text 3.3 above).

Text A2.5: Abū l-Barakāt’s discussion—when he says “had [Aristotle] mentioned [the hypothetical syllogisms] it would have been translated into Arabic”—does not harm Avicenna’s claim that perhaps Aristotle (*al-mu‘allim al-awwal*) mentioned them but [the text] was not translated into Arabic, because it does not exclude the claim as a possibility. But anyway, Aristotle’s failure to mention them does not compel us to do without them, because the sciences are brought to completion one claim at a time; the falsity of [Abū l-Barakāt’s reasoning] is obvious to everyone (*HK* 317.6-10).

A comment on al-Ḥūnaḡī’s slightly harsh criticism is in order here. Abū l-Barakāt has an argument as to why we need not bother with a treatment of hypothetical syllogisms (namely, that those which are useful are obvious enough to require no separate exposition), and goes on from this to lament the

⁴⁶ Cf. *BM* 64–69; statement of Avicenna’s view from the beginning of section 16 on 64, beginning of Abū l-Barakāt’s rejoinder from 65.11; I don’t think the doctrine as transmitted by al-Rāzī is taken verbatim. I am grateful to Jari Kaukua, who has drawn my attention to F. Benevise, “Scepticism and Semantics in Twelfth-Century Arabic Philosophy”, *Theoria* 2020 (doi.org/10.1111/theo.12272), which examines in detail the influence of Abū l-Barakāt on al-Rāzī both here and relative to Text A3.4 below.

⁴⁷ Al-Rāzī, *Šarḡ ‘Uyūn al-Ḥikmah*, Mu’assasat al-Šādiq, 1415 AH/1994, p. 164.5-12.

fact that Avicenna's focus on them leads him to postulate a lost Aristotelian treatise. Abū l-Barakāt is inferring nothing from Aristotle's silence, certainly not that the hypothetical syllogistic should be ignored; he is however worried at Avicenna's precipitate ascription of a missing treatise to Aristotle on such slender grounds.

For the third logician I consider, Naġm al-Dīn al-Kātibī, I limit myself to a few notes from al-Kātibī's commentary on al-Ĥūnaġī's *Kašf*.⁴⁸ Once again, as in (3) above, Abū l-Barakāt contributes his alternative understanding of the denominative (ad *HK* 24.pu-u), and—as in (4) above—his claims about the ease with which a definition can be constructed (ad *HK* 60.5-6). All that al-Kātibī does is to clarify the claims made in the text, in the second, by quoting al-Rāzī's rejection of it.

Lastly, and briefly, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī. Al-Ṭūsī mentions Abū l-Barakāt twice in *Asās al-iqtibās*, on issues different from those raised by the preceding logicians, and with great respect; he is *Ḥwāġa* – roughly, *Šayḥ* – Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġdādī. This respect surprises me, given how enraged al-Ṭūsī becomes at al-Rāzī's much less insulting interventions on Avicennan doctrine. It also shows that there is a gulf between al-Ṭūsī and the school Avicennists. (7) Al-Ṭūsī introduces Abū l-Barakāt's models (194: "And *Ḥwāġa* Abū l-Barakāt al-Baġdādī has represented these explanations [regarding the conditions of productive syllogisms] with lines, so that they can be visualized and easily memorized..."),⁴⁹ and (8) refers to him as he sets out a detail of demonstration theory (405): "And Abū l-Barakāt has said that a proposition may be both a principle and a problem, provided that neither [of the two roles] is at the same level, and that there is no [vicious] circle".⁵⁰ (I confess, I'm puzzled al-Ṭūsī takes the second point here from Abū l-Barakāt when he could have taken it directly from Avicenna).

⁴⁸ Al-Kātibī, *Šarḥ Kašf al-asrār* (MS Süleymaniya, Carullah 1417); I am grateful to Khaled El-Rouayheb for sending me a copy of the manuscript, and to Mohammad Zarepour for transcribing it for me.

⁴⁹ See footnote 9 above.

⁵⁰ *Asās al-iqtibās*, ed. M. Raḡawī, Tehran U.P., Tehran 1947, pp. 194–5 for conditions of productive syllogisms, and p. 405 for demonstration theory. I make these comments on the basis of information generously supplied by my colleague Mohammad Zarepour.

Appendix 3: References to Abū l-Barakāt's Logic in Subtle Points

This appendix is intended to give some sense of what the school Avicennists thought of Abū l-Barakāt's logic. It is also written as a preliminary response to Yahya Michot's invitation to study the references in *Subtle Points* to Abū l-Barakāt's logic in more depth. Much remains to be done, but I hope the following notes ease the way to such a study. I would note (3) and (4) invite proper study. The references are taken from Michot's appendix 3 (page 121); all references with r(ecto) and v(erso) are to Feyzullah Efendi 1217. Before I go further, let me note that *Sayh al-yabūd* (used already by al-Sāwī; see footnote 30 above) is not necessarily an insult, though in light of Abū l-Barakāt's conversion to Islam, it probably means (and I am grateful to Ayman Shihadeh for this insight) "whatever you say you are, you're still a Jew to me."

(1) 4v.5: "So do not preoccupy yourself with what the Shaykh of the Jews says!" From a Subtle Point on the simple and compound expression:

Text A3.1: The expression signifying a meaning univocally is either simple or compound. The simple is the expression no part of which is intended to signify anything insofar as it is a part. [Illegible]... if it signifies the essence it is simple; if on the other hand it signifies the attribute it is compound (*wa-in kāna dāllan 'alā l-ṣifa fa-huwa murakkab*). Further, there is no difference between the compound (*al-murakkab*) and the composite (*al-mu'allaf*). So do not preoccupy yourself with what the Shaykh of the Jews claims. For the compound is the opposite [of the simple]; it is the expression every part of which signifies part of the complex of the meaning, like "Zayd walks" (which is called a phrase). [4v.1–6]

This is a reference to material presented in Texts 3.1 and A2.2 above. The *Subtle* author adopts Avicenna's division of expression into simple and compound. If we were to leave out what is in the square brackets, I think we would not go far wrong, though I can't fit anything helpful to the traces of writing I can make out.⁵¹

(2) 7r.13: "As for what the Shaykh [of the Jews] imagined, as well as those [among] the non-Arabs who followed him..." From a Subtle Point on the universal and the particular expression:

Text A3.2: The universal simple expression is the general expression, that which signifies a many sharing in a single meaning. This many could either be in extramental existence (like man and animal), or in mental existence (like sun and moon). It is delineated as the expression the very conception of whose meaning does not preclude a many sharing in it (other than a consideration outside the meaning itself). It divides into three: that in which the sharing is actual (like man and animal), that in which the sharing is potential and possible (like cubed, or celestial dodecahedron), and that in which there is no sharing, whether actual or possible, but due to [a reason] other than the meaning (like sun or moon). As for what the Shaykh [of the Jews] imagined, as well as those [among] the non-Arabs who followed him, namely, that there is another division, [this is simply wrong:] either it is possible or it is not (*immā an yakūna mumkinan aw lā yakūna*), if it is [possible], it is in the second [subdivision], and if it is not, it is in the third. [7r.6–u]

A reference, I believe, to *BM* 18.1–19, from 18.9. I'm not sure exactly what the worry is, but in any event, the caution against following the Shaykh of the Jews here is clearly a reference to where Abū l-Barakāt places in his discussion of mental images those of which many are possible but do not exist (like walls of gold). In *Pointers* 1.9 (*AI* 6.13–7.2), Avicenna divides under sharing under a universal meaning into actual or not actual, and under not actual, into possible or not possible (for a reason extrinsic to the meaning). It seems to me that the most Abū l-Barakāt differs in his division from the Avicennan is in highlighting the case of possible multiple but non-actual instantiations. Abū l-Barakāt considers cases where being a universal holds of a term with one instantiation, with no instantiation, and with many instantiations.

⁵¹ I am grateful to Dustin Klinger and Ayman Shihadeh for advice; autopsy may resolve the issue.

Text A3.3: Its condition is being apt and possible to exist (*al-ṣiḥḥa wa-l-ḡawāz*), not existence and occurrence (*al-wuḡūd wa-l-ḥuṣūl*); it could be only one in existence, like sun... and there could be not even one in existence, like many mental images... and there may be many in existence... [BM 18.5, 18.9, 18.14]

The process of division of universals in al-Rāzī's *Mulabḥaṣ*—which the *Subtle* author claims is inspired by Abū l-Barakāt—leads to what is impossible to exist (partner of the Creator), what is possible to exist but not known to exist (the wall of sapphire), what may exist but of which there can be no more than one (God), what may exist and happens to be unique even though another is possible (the Sun), what may exist and is finite in number (the planets), and what may exist and could be infinite in number (men). Al-Kātibī will extend this in the *Šamsiyya* to one more subdivision. I think the *Subtle* author is right in claiming that the original Avicennan division is perfectly adequate for all the logical distinctions which need to be made.

(3) 8v.4: “Turn away from what the Šayḥ [of the Jews] said about this; it is all low-grade dates!” From a Subtle Point on the constitutive essential (8r.8), in which the author argues that the essentials are what are essential for the quiddity shared by instantiations of the quiddity, and not the accidental properties which qualify each instantiation; the argument concludes:

Text A3.4: So it has been proved that the essentials are constitutives of realities (*al-dātiyyāt hiya muqawwimāt al-ḥaqā'iq*). Turn away from what the Shaykh [of the Jews] said about this; it is all low-grade dates! [8v.3–4]

This is an argument against Abū l-Barakāt's long discussion in section 5 of *al-Kitāb al-mu'tabar*, On pursuing what is said with respect to essential and accidental qualifications (BM 22-29), a fascinating text which – as far as I know – is yet to be fully explored.⁵² Abū l-Barakāt concludes an argument which is often disrespectful of Avicenna and the contradictions among his accounts of this and related matters, with the distressing nominalist claim:

Text A3.5: So [the scientist who] defines “tall literate man” has made every one of “man” and “tall” and “literate” essential for him insofar as [the scientist] has defined and named him (*fa-inna man 'arrafa insānan ṭawīlan kātiban qad ḡa'ala kulla wāḥidin min al-insān wa-l-ṭawīl wa-l-kātib dātiyyan labu min ḥayṭu 'arrafahu wa-sammāhu*). [BM 29.12–13]

(4) 26v.5 “Do not pay attention to what the Shaykh of the Jews says!” From a Useful Note at the end of a Subtle Point on the possible and its divisions:

Text A3.6: Useful Note: So it is known from what has been said that the absolute is what is determinate in the way things are in themselves but is not determinate for us (*mā yakūnu mutabaṣṣilan fī nafs al-amr wa-lā yakūnu mutabaṣṣilan 'indanā*), the necessary is what is determinate in the way things are in themselves and is determinate for us (*mā yakūnu mutabaṣṣilan fī nafs al-amr wa-yakūnu mutabaṣṣilan 'indanā*), and the possible is what is not determinate in the way things are in themselves nor [determinate] for us insofar as its possibility is considered (*mā lā yakūnu mutabaṣṣilan fī nafs al-amr wa-lā 'indanā min ḥayṭu 'tibār imkānibi*). Do not pay attention to what the Shaykh of the Jews says! [26v.2–5]

This is a reference to definitions of the modalities discussed by Abū l-Barakāt from BM 84 on, on matters and modes. This is another occasion on which Abū l-Barakāt compares Aristotle's account with alternatives, not (as he stresses) the better to interpret Aristotle, but to come to a position closer to the truth. He discards the characterization the *Subtle* author works with for the absolute and the modalized propositions in terms of what is determinate in the way things are in themselves and what is determinate for us.

(5) 47v.3 “Do not listen to what the Shaykh of the Jews says!” This comes at the end of a Subtle Point on the division of the figures of the syllogism as a function of how the middle term is placed relative to the other two terms. It is a reference to BM 123.9, where Abū l-Barakāt gives the number of figures as three (as did Avicenna in *Pointers*). The number of figures the division ultimately issues in depends on whether one takes the order of terms in the conclusion to be significant; yet many (such as al-Rāzī) limit the

⁵² Though see footnote 46 above.

syllogism to the two premises. In any event, this is the context for the *Subtle* author's worry about those who doubt that the proper division of the syllogism gives four figures:

Text A3.7: The verification of this, and the response to them, is by way of the decisive demonstration of the necessity of the fourth figure (*bi-l-burbān al-qāṭi* 'alā wuḡūb al-šakl al-rābi') [47v.2–3].

(6) 54r.8 “As for the Shaykh [of the Jews], he said...” This comes from a *Subtle* Point on syllogisms with purely modalized premises in the four figures,

Text A3.8: As for the Shaykh [of the Jews], he said that the composition of necessary [premises] in [the second figure] is just the same as the composition of absolute [premises], and he didn't make a single exception. [54r.8–10]

According to the *Subtle* author, a different proof is used for Baroco (an upgrading proof, in which a possible that comes up in the course of the reductio proof is supposed to exist; *li-anna l-naqīd al-mumkin al-‘ammī nafriḍubu mawḡūdan*, 54r.6).⁵³ The *Subtle* author takes it for granted that when proofs for purely modalized syllogisms differ from proofs for syllogisms with absolute premises—here, in using reductio differently—, it is grounds for saying that the composition of the purely modalized differs from those with absolute premises. By contrast, Abū l-Barakāt says explicitly that both sets of syllogisms have the same proofs:

Text A3.9: If the propositions are necessary, the conclusions are—like [the premises]—necessary in the first and second figures, and the productive and unproductive moods are exactly the same, with the same examples and the same proofs to distinguish between generality and particularity in the terms for each one of the moods. [*BM* 148.9–12]

(7) 54v.6–7 “The Shaykh of the Jews thinks that the two possibles give a conclusion in the second figure if...” Having just mentioned that a first-figure mix with a negative (two-sided) possibility premise can produce if the premise is taken as affirmative (due to its affirmative conjunct), the *Subtle* author goes on to a mistake Abū l-Barakāt makes which is perhaps inspired by this procedure:

Text A3.10: The Shaykh of the Jews thinks that the two possibles give a conclusion in the second figure if the affirmative of one of the two premises is reduced to the negative, so that there is no difference in quality. This comes to nothing; there is no way in any respect at all for these, as was stated earlier. [54v.6–9]

The *Subtle* author is here referring back to the following, typically Avicennan statement (at the root of the claim Abū l-Barakāt takes issue with in Text 3.2):

Text A3.11: There is absolutely no syllogism from two general absolutes, or from two possibles; this is the truth, and it is because two universal absolutes, one affirmative and the other negative, may be true together of a single thing, as for example “every man is sleeping” and “every man is at least once not sleeping” (*kull insān laysa bi-nā'im waqtan mā*). [49v.9–12]

And this is the reason that the *Subtle* author criticizes the following comments made by Abū l-Barakāt about the second-figure mixes with possibility premises:

Text A3.12: Possibles also produce in the second figure, but mental [possible conclusions, which is to say one-sided possible conclusions], because the converses of possible propositions may be necessary, so mental possibility is general for them (whether they are [necessary] or not). Further, [in the second figure,] moods are productive [for possibles] that are not productive for absolutes and necessities; [such a mood] has affirmative [two-sided premises one of] which is reduced to the negative, so [the mood's] productivity in reality goes back to two [premises] which differ as to affirmation and negation. [*BM* 149.6–9]

⁵³ The *Subtle* author has already told us (50r11) that the *mutlaqa* proposition used in the second figure is the de-scriptional (e.g. every A is always B as long as it is A).

Appendix 4: References to al-Rāzī's Logic in *Subtle Points*

Part of what I claim as a result of this study is that – whatever the *Subtle* author said – al-Rāzī did not in fact follow Abū l-Barakāt; he differs in doctrinal specifics and, more importantly, in the broader shape of his logical project. For some of these doctrinal specifics, and – as in the last appendix – in the hope of helping move along the further study of *Subtle Points*, I enlarge on Michot's notes on the Humbug's logic.⁵⁴ Mapping the shape of al-Rāzī's logical project and its difference from Abū l-Barakāt's lies far beyond the present study, though note that al-Rāzī accepts without complaint what Abū l-Barakāt rejects in Text 3.2 and the paraphrase leading up to it. I think it is true to offer the following broad characterization: al-Rāzī is arguing from within the Avicennan system, and is motivated in his objections by extra-logical considerations, whereas Abū l-Barakāt is arguing between the Avicennan and the Fārābian logical systems, even though mainly drawing on the Avicennan. Further, I think that this broad difference is reflected in the specificity of the *Subtle* author's complaints against al-Rāzī; they are arguing about conclusions within roughly the same system. I would mark out (5) and (8) below as especially worthy of future study.

Lastly, a short comment on what is clearly intended to be an insulting way to refer to al-Rāzī, *ḥašwī l-a'āğim*. Michot's rendition as "Persian Humbug" is stylish, and I have adopted it, but to be a humbug apparently entails deceit, and it's not clear to me the *Subtle* author is accusing al-Rāzī of anything worse than stupidity. *Ḥašwī* is one in al-Rāzī's rich array of insulting terms to describe his enemies,⁵⁵ and he flings it about to mean something like "wooden-minded literalist". Further, Avicenna and all the school Avicennists we know of are non-Arab (and specifically Persian), and I am skeptical that *a'āğim* (those who are not native speakers of Arabic) is meant here in this narrow sense. In short, I wonder if the *Subtle* author is simply calling al-Rāzī something like "the unintelligible and credulous dimwit".

(1) 4r.15: "There is no need for the proviso mentioned by the Humbug"; a reference to al-Rāzī's treatment of Avicenna's definition of signification, in which he adds riders to the definitions of signification by containment and implication.⁵⁶ The reference to al-Rāzī actually begins at line 5 (dismissed not as the Humbug here, but with the universally popular insult, "a certain later scholar"):

Text A4.1: A preconception, with a useful note: A certain later scholar (*ba'd al-muta'abhirin*) thought that if the expression is imposed as correspondent [signifier] (*mutābaqatan*) equivocally for a complex [meaning] (*li-ğumla*) and for part of it (...) one should add another proviso [to the definition], "or [signifies] one of the parts of that meaning insofar as it is a part [of that meaning]" (*min ḥaytu huwa ġuz'uhu*). [4r.5–8].

The counterargument (such as it is) takes up the next half of the side of folio, beginning with "what a wretched supposition!" (*bi'sa l-zann*), and culminating in the phrase noted by Michot. I don't intend to dwell on the point at issue, beyond noting that the problem al-Rāzī identified was acknowledged as a real one by most scholars I have read, even though his solution was not adopted as the default position. There is no evidence in *BM* that Abū l-Barakāt had noticed the problem; he simply delivers the Avicennan account of signification by containment and by implication.

(2) 7r.14 is covered above in appendix 3; I suppose it is not impossible (but – as far as I can see – vastly unimportant) that al-Rāzī took his lead from Abū l-Barakāt on the division of universals with respect to their instantiations.

⁵⁴ Given in his appendix 4: Michot, "*Al-Nukat*" (above, n. 1), p. 122.

⁵⁵ See e.g. his attack on those who use extra-Koranic material to understand the creation pericope, *al-Tafsīr al-kabīr* 2, p.166.9 (beginning a series of attacks on the *ḥašwiyya*). I am grateful to Ayman Shihadeh for advice on the vowels and the meaning of the term.

⁵⁶ For the riders and why they are needed, see T. Street, "The Reception of *Pointers* 1.6 in Thirteenth-Century Logic: On the Expression's Signification of Meaning", in N. Germann - M. Najafi (eds.), *Philosophy and Language in the Islamic World*, De Gruyter, Berlin 2020, pp. 101-28, at p. 110, with reference to a rider set out in *RM* 19.4-8.

(3) 25v.6

Text A4.2: Do not pay attention to what the Humbug of the non-Arabs says, that is, that it is not possible to forecast with certainty the rise and the setting [of a star]! This is indeed due to his stupid understanding [of the matter] (*fa-dālika subf min fabmibi*) [25v.6-7].

This is hardly a fair attack. Al-Rāzī says some pages before the statement to which the *Subtle* author refers that he (al-Rāzī) has no interest generally speaking in examples, but worries about some examples, in case people learning logic take them to be primary premises for the discipline from which they are taken; from *RM* 151.7, and especially 152.1–3. Al-Rāzī’s offending statement comes when, after having set out aspects of the absolute proposition, he turns to deal with the claim that only the perpetual proposition can be universal:

Text A4.3: The answer to this is that being described by the predicate is more general than being described by it always or not always (because [this more general] can be divided into the [other] two, and the basis for division shares in the two parts). And Avicenna (*al-šayb*) also argued for the falsity [of the claim] by the fact that we predicate rising and setting of celestial bodies (*al-kawākib*), even though that is not perpetual [*RM* 161.11–pu].

Al-Rāzī comes back to assess Avicenna’s argument here at the end of the section. His concern is once again with the counter-example, and (on this occasion) with how persuasive the argument is for someone who does not accept Avicenna’s other philosophical commitments.

Text A4.4: As for what Avicenna argues about the rising and setting of the celestial bodies, whoever does not believe in the necessity of rising and setting with respect to the celestial bodies will not be able to reach a decisive position that every celestial body is described with rising and setting [*RM* 163.3-5]

(4) 25v.13

Text A4.5: Do not turn towards what the Humbug of the non-Arabs says, that is, that the minds of the commonality are far away from grasping these considerations! Indeed, what is meant by the term “commonality” (*‘amma*) is not the riff-raff (*ra’ā*) and the silly people (*safsāf*) as he came to believe. What is thereby meant is the Kalām theologians (*mutakallimūn*) [25v.13–u].

I pass over the snide imputation as to the status of theologians like al-Rāzī. The reference is, in the first instance, to Avicenna’s characterization of one-sided possibility (*al-inkān al-‘amm*) as the popular usage of “possibility”; this in turn is a reference back to one of Aristotle’s remarks in the *Prior Analytics*.⁵⁷ Al-Rāzī is taking issue with Avicenna, and ends the passage with his own preferred etymology for the expression.

Text A4.6: In Avicenna’s account (*wa-fī kalām al-šayb*) there is a pointer to the fact that this sense is only called general possibility because the commonality mean by “possible” just that; but this is as remote as the commonality are from the apprehension of such matters. It is likelier, rather, that its derivation is from generality, for this sense [of possible] is more general in relation to the other sense. [*RM* 153.10-12]

(5) 31r.5: Straight after introducing the definition of contradiction (a purely formal matter), the *Subtle* author talks about the under-determination of the future possible with respect to truth and contradiction. Having made this claim, he goes on in the passage Michot identified:

Text A4.7: Do not pay attention to what the Humbug of the non-Arabs says, that is, that the [things that can be known, *al-ma’lūmāt*] are to be traced back to the Necessary Existent, are predetermined by (*muqaddar ‘inda*) Him, and have a specified time (*waqt mu’ayyan*)! This is indeed babble (*badar*) with which one must not preoccupy oneself. We do not take the things that can be known insofar as they relate to the Necessary Existent, but rather insofar as they relate to us. Were we to take them insofar as they relate to the Necessary Existent, we would only say “necessary” and “impossible” and

⁵⁷ Avicenna, *al-Nağāt* 30.7–33.10; cf. *Prior Analytics* 25a.36–25b.4.

nothing else, and choice and capacity would be illusory (*wa-baṭala l-iḥtiyār wa-l-isti'dād*), as would the nature of the possible [31r.4-9].

Again, a slightly unfair attack on al-Rāzī. He considers a position on future contingents and its non-logical consequence:

Text A4.8: With respect to the future [possible], the widely-accepted position (*al-mašhūr*) is that truth and falsity are indeterminate with respect to it because, if we have “Zayd walks tomorrow” and “Zayd will not walk tomorrow”, only one of them is determinate in that it is true if its occurrence is necessary and its contradictory is impossible. Were that the case, everyone would be predetermined (*muğbaran*) in his act, unable to avoid doing it; but predetermination is false, and so what leads to it is also false. Know that these are corollaries of the question of predetermination (...) [RM 176.pu–177.4].

And predetermination is a question al-Rāzī defers to its proper place, the metaphysics.

(6) 47v.8:

Text A4.9: Do not listen at all to what the Humbug of the non-Arabs says, that is, that the fourth [figure] comes about from the conversion (*aks*) of each one of its two premises! This is a mistake, null and void (*lā yu'awwalu 'alay-hi*). [47v.8–9]

This is the end of a short note in which the *Subtle* author relates each of the imperfect figures to the first. He begins his account with the fourth: “if the order of the premises of the first figure is reversed (*aks tartīb muqaddamatayhi*), that which is called the fourth comes about” (47v.6–7), though a few further instructions follow for individual moods. I think he means—and I take Bramantip as an example—we can go from Barbara (“every C is B, every B is A, therefore every C is A”), reorder the premises and reverse the convention that C is the minor and A is the major, to get “every B is A, every C is B, therefore some A is C”. Al-Rāzī tells us how to derive a mood in the fourth thus:

Text A4.10: If you convert both [the first's] premises together (*in akasta muqaddamatayhi ma'an*), the middle becomes subject in the minor and predicate in the major, which is the fourth figure [RM 250.6–7].

A translation (which reflects how the *Subtle* author understands the passage) which instructs us to take Barbara (“every C is B, every B is A, therefore every C is A”) and convert both premises to get “some B is C, some A is B”; but this cannot be what al-Rāzī means, and I believe that he is in fact saying exactly what the *Subtle* author has stipulated (and so the translation should in fact read something like “if you reorder both premises”).

(7) 53v.12: “Likewise, the Humbug of the non-Arabs followed [al-Ġilī] in this [matter].” The passage is given its context by Michot at 106 (slightly modified):

Text A4.11: Do not listen to what al-Ġilī says, that is, that the conclusion of these two moods is not proved through the first figure; this indeed comes to nothing. Likewise, the Humbug of the non-Arabs followed him in this [matter] [53v.11–12].

I don't know the text by al-Ġilī, but al-Rāzī is claiming that the fourth and fifth moods of the fourth figure (that is, Fesapo and Fresison) cannot be proved by reduction to the first figure:

Text A4.12: The fourth mood (“every B is C, no A is B, therefore some C is not A”) cannot be proved through the first [figure] because the negative [“no A is B”] cannot be the minor premise in the first; rather, [it is proved] either through the second [figure mood Festino] by converting the minor, or through the third [figure mood Felapton] by converting the major, or by *reductio* [RM 270.15–pu].

Al-Rāzī goes on to deal with the fifth mood (Fresison) using the same methods (RM 271.10). Against this, the *Subtle* author would prove the fourth mood of the fourth (for example) by converting both premises: “some C is B, no B is A, therefore some C is not A” (Ferio). I have to say that this alternative proof also looks fine to me, though it only works if the major e-proposition is convertible.

(8) 56v.4:

Text A4.13: Do not listen to what the Humbug of the non-Arabs says about this, as well as those who follow him, among those pretending to be clever (*mutahadliq*).

The *Subtle* author is here speaking of modal strength of the conclusion of a mixed syllogism in the first two moods of the fourth figure (that is, Bramantip and Dimaris). I think the corresponding passage in the *Mulabḥaṣ* is:

Text A4.14: Mix of absolute with necessary. Let us take the major as a necessary. For the two moods which produce an i-proposition, the conclusion is a one-sided possible. [RM 307.9–11]

The *Subtle* author is arguing that the conclusion is an absolute by arguing that the converse of an absolute is an absolute (also at 56v.4); al-Rāzī would disagree because he takes an absolute to convert as a possible.

Afterword

Frank Griffel has a book to appear soon which carries on the line of research begun in “The Dialectical Turn” (above, n. 2). He kindly offered me a chance to see passages from the book which relate to the theme of this paper; I regret that time did not permit me to take up the offer.