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\* Il volume, dedicato al pensiero arabo, è stato pensato e organizzato da Amos Bertolacci. L'articolo di Concetta Luna rappresenta la continuazione dell'articolo pubblicato nel volume precedente.

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**Alexander's 'Ināya Transformed:  
Justice as Divine Providence in Al-Fārābī**

In an important passage of the *Ārā' ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila*, al-Fārābī endorses the view that the perpetuation of natural kinds in the sublunary realm concerns the species as a whole and is not related to the survival of a specific individual<sup>1</sup>. In other words, the continuous existence of a certain animal species 'x' does not depend on the permanent survival of one of its particular members 'x-1' but rather on the continuous existence of its form 'Fx'. To illustrate this point, al-Fārābī appeals to the familiar example of animal reproduction. For instance, the continuous existence of horses does not depend on the permanent existence of a specific horse (e.g. Seabiscuit or Bucephalus) but on the ability of horses to generate new individual members of the species. As a result, according to al-Fārābī one can assert that a sublunary species is permanent if « at every moment of time there exists a particular individual of that species in any given place »<sup>2</sup>. The point is rather obvious, however the argument becomes much more interesting when one takes into consideration the context in which it emerges.

Al-Fārābī resorts to this reasoning in the course of a discussion on providence. He uses the argument outlined to establish the view that the cosmos is structured to insure the flourishing of sublunary life only at the level of species and not that of particulars. Hence, it is acceptable to say, according to al-Fārābī, that providence insures the continuous existence of sublunary species but it would be incorrect to infer from this that providence cares for specific individuals or brings about particular events.

These last remarks make it quite clear that al-Fārābī's position on this issue is very close to the one developed by Alexander of Aphrodisias. Indeed, both authors hold the opinion that providence obtains at the level of species and not particulars. To clarify this statement, an example might be useful. Consider for instance the belief that 'providence helped Hārūn ar-Rašīd capture the city of Heraclea in Byzantium'. According to our authors this is

<sup>1</sup> ABU NAṢR AL-FĀRĀBĪ, *On the Perfect State (Mabādi' Ārā' ahl al-Madīna al-Fāḍila)*, ed. R. WALZER, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1985, pp. 144-162.

<sup>2</sup> WALZER, *Perfect State* cit., pp. 154, 10. Translation slightly modified.