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NOTES ET DOCUMENTS

I. – CRITICAL EDITION OF IBN AL-FĀRIḌ'S DIWĀN
PRÉSENTATION DE L'ÉDITION PUBLIÉE PAR L'I.F.A.O. (LE CAIRE)

by

Giuseppe SCATTOLIN

Reading a Sufi Text.

1. The Hermeneutical Question: Sufi Text and Sufi Experience.

Presenting my critical edition of the *Dīwān* of the great Egyptian Sufi poet, 'Umar b. al-Fāriḍ (576/1181-632/1235), I wish to introduce some of its features highlighting, at the same time, some questions concerning the understanding and the interpretation of such a difficult Sufi text[1].

1-1. Approaching Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi Poetry.

Understanding any literary text is a difficult task. A distance always lies between our epistemological world and that of its author. Overcoming such a distance means

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1. This is a revised version of a lecture given at the Symposium on «Sufism during the Mamlûk period», IFAO, Cairo 26-30 May, 2003; as for the edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* see: *The Dīwān of Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, a critical edition by Giuseppe SCATTOLIN (Cairo: IFAO, 2004), with a preface in French by Jean-Yves L'HÔPITAL, and two introductions, one in English and the other in Arabic, by Giuseppe SCATTOLIN, so as to make the text readable to all kinds of people. This edition here is referred to as *The Dīwān*.

undertaking a risky but unavoidable journey from our spiritual world to that of the author, and vice versa the author's spiritual world to ours. One must try, as it were, to enter into the author's epistemological world as well as to make the author's epistemological world enter into our own in order to reach a level of common understanding. Such a work, or journey, of interpreting and understanding is what is meant by hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is the way of accomplishing such a perilous journey between different epistemological worlds or spiritual horizons, trying to reach what one of the greatest thinkers of hermeneutics of our time, Hans-Georg Gadamer, calls «the fusion of horizons». In modern and contemporary philosophy, thanks to the work of prominent thinkers such as Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Wilhem Dilthey (1883-1911), Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), Jacques Derrida (1930-2004), and others, hermeneutics has been given increasing attention, becoming a central issue in all fields of human expression. Even the so-called positive, experimental sciences, such as physics, chemistry, etc., that used to rely almost exclusively on the mathematical-experimental method, are now concerned with hermeneutics in order to have a fuller understanding of their achievements[2].

In the light of such new hermeneutical insights it has become clearer now that not only «translating» a literary text always means «interpreting» it (or «betraying it», as a well known saying points out), but that all our human acts, such as reading, thinking, talking etc. are actually «interpretive acts», *i.e.* hermeneutical approaches to reality. Through such operations in fact we try to seize, to have hold of and appropriate the exterior reality, lying outside our own self, and to «translate» it into our own inner world of concepts, feelings and words, a world familiar and comprehensible to us. Thus, the whole human process of understanding and knowledge is now understood and described as a fundamental hermeneutical approach to reality, an approach always encumbered with a number of problems. Finally, one could even infer from such a new understanding of human activity that even the famous definition of the human being, given by Aristotle, as a «*logikòs*, that is a «thinking» being, could and

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2.   The literature in the field of hermeneutics is enormous. Only some references given here from which some basic information and bibliography can be taken: Marc TARDIEU (ed.), *Les règles de l'interpretation* (Paris, Cerf, 1987); John C. MALLERY, Roger HURWITZ, Gavan DUFFY, «Hermeneutics: From Textual Explication to Computer Understanding?», in *The Encyclopedia of Artificial Intelligence*, ed. by Stuart C. Shapiro (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1987, taken from *jcma@ai.mit.edu*); AA.VV., *Naissance de la méthode critique. Colloque du centenaire de l'École biblique et archéologique fançaise de Jérusalem* (Paris, Cerf, 1992); GRONDIN, J., «Herméneutique», in *Les notions philosophique*, vol. II/tome 1, dirigé pas Sylvain Auroux (Paris, Presses Universitaires De France, 1998, 1st ed. 1990), pp. 1129b-1134a; Gaspare MURA, *Ermeneutica e verità. Storia e problemi della filosofia dell'interpretazione*, (Roma, Cittá Nuova, 1997, 1st. ed. 1990).

should be re-worded in a more comprehensive one: the human being is essentially a «hermeneutic being», *i.e.*, it is that being that can translate reality, *i.e.* whatever exists, into his own world in order to comprehend it. Thus, the human being appears to be the great and central «interpreter» of the whole reality. Here we join some of the deepest insights about the ontological constitution of the human being found both in ancient and modern philosophical and religious thinking, such as in Heidegger who talked of human language as «the house of Being». I would like to point out here that a quite similar view is present also in some important Sufi insights, such as that of the Andalusian Sufi, the «Greatest Master», Ibn al-ʿArabī (560-638/1165-1240), who spoke of the human as the great *barzakh* (literally the «isthmus», the joining strip between two lands) joining the Divine and upper world to the earthly, lower one. Further elaboration on such a theme would be very useful for a comparative view of the different mystical traditions.

In light of all these epistemological developments, one has to overcome first of all the naive idea that a text is the simple and straight mirror of the author's inner world, and that words represent the direct expression of the author's intention and vision, so that understanding the literal meaning of the text automatically entails understanding the author's vision. Besides, one has to overcome also the romantic idea of a «connatural link or direct correspondence» between the reader and the author (or, say, the author's spirit), so that by simply relying on one's own personal inner intuition or empathy, one can perceive and understand the author's interior mind and intention, as if through a direct inspiration from the author or, say, the author's «spirit», reaching in this way the true meaning of the text. Now, we have become much more aware that in such an approach one actually ends up finding only one's own inner world projected into the text and not the actual vision and mind of the author. Such attitudes are still very common among many amateurish readers of Sufism and mysticism in general, who easily jump from one author to another, from one current to another, finding everywhere identical visions and experiences, and whatever else they want to find. To be honest, one has also to acknowledge that even in reading many scholarly and serious works on Sufism one is often led to ask: but on what ground has this scholar chosen such a text to support such a point? Just out of his own personal intuition, liking or taste, or because such a text actually proves to be of primary importance in the whole context of that particular Sufi's writings? In any case such a claim should be proved and not merely presumed. Finally, to tell the truth, one has to avow that very rarely a satisfying answer is given on the part of most scholars to such questioning.

Now, there is a quite large consensus among scholars on the obvious fact that one can have access to the author's inner world or vision only through the actual text that

has in fact come to us from him/her, and in no other way. Respect for the «objectivity» of the text is seen now to be the first and fundamental step of any hermenutical work. All exterior information may be helpful, but in the end the basic reference remains the text itself, and this has its own inner cohesion and structure that must be respected. Each term in the text, in fact, is linked with the others in specific relationships intended by its author, and it is only in such a particular context that a given term or expression does acquire the true and full meaning it had in the author's mind. Consequently, in order to understand a text it is very important to find out first of all its inner structure, the position of each term in it, the way terms are connected and related to each other, and the particular meaning they gain in such relationships inside the sequence or, say, the texture of the whole text. Thus, clarifying the linguistic structure of a text appears to be the first and basic step through which one can have access to its contents, and consequently (and only «in some way», one should always add) to the inner world or mind of the author. In fact, only in their semantic network of relationships words and linguistic expressions can be read and understood, as far as possible, according to the meaning they had in the mind of the author when composing the text.

Besides, every author is part of a historical context, and therefore his/her language is also an expression of a historical linguistic situation. This point has become of the greatest importance in modern hermeneutics. Ibn al-Fāriḍ, for example, did not invented the Sufi language, but has received it from his linguistic tradition such that he had to interact with it in order to express his own particular vision and experience. Thus, one should also, as far as possible, try to reconstruct the author's historical context and his/her interaction with it in order to get a better perception of the dimensions and the originality of his/her Sufi and literary experience and vision. Hermeneutics, in fact, has made us all the more aware of the fact that the human being is always a «historical being», living, developing and interacting within history. A sound hermeneutical approach should lead in the end to the so-called «fusion of horizons» of the author and ours, to use Gadamer's famous expression. At this point, one can say that the travel to and from the author's spiritual world has been accomplished and a communication between the two worlds has been established. Nonetheless, one should be always aware of the fact that such a «fusion of horizons» can never be total. Actually, one finds him/herself in a work of continuous «re-interpretation» of texts, as if in a spiraling growth of understanding and comprehension, because our horizons of comprehension of the text become ever more deeper and wider. This is the famous «hermeneutical circle», *i.e.*, the growing hermeneutical comprehension of a text through its continuous re-reading, proposed first by Schleiermacher.

It has been in such hermeneutical perspective that I have tried, and continue try-
ing, to understand, and so to «re-interpret», the spiritual world, or, say, the vision
and experience, of the great Sufi Egyptian poet 'Umar b. al-Fāriḍ, a poet known for
his enigmatic and obscure language.

Many attempts have been made in the past and are made in the present to unravel
the meaning of his verse gaining a fuller insight into his mystical experience. A large
number of ancient commentaries as well as modern studies are found in the field.
Among the first ones one finds the commentaries of Sa'īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 699/
1300), 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 730/1330), Dāwūd b. Muḥammad al-Qayṣarī (d.
751/1350), Badr al-Dīn al-Būrīnī (d. 1024/1615) and 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī (d.
1143/1731). Among the most prominent modern scholars of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi poetry
one finds the names of Ignazio Di Matteo (d. 1948) and Carlo Alfonso Nallino (d.
1938) in Italy; Reynold Alleyne Nicholson (d. 1945) and Arthur John Arberry (d.
1973) in Britain; Émile Dermenghem (d. 1971) and Louis Gardet (d. 1986) in France;
Muḥammad Muṣṭafā Ḥilmī in Egypt. More recently other scholars have given their
contribution to this field such as Issa J. Boullata in Canada, Thomas Emil Homerin
in the United States, Giuseppe Scattolin in Italy, Jean-Yves l'Hôpital in France, 'Āṭif
Djawdat Naṣr and 'Abd al-Khāliq Maḥmūd 'Abd al-Khāliq in Egypt[3].

However, understanding Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical poetry has proved for all a particu-
larly complicated problem for a number of reasons. Firstly, we possess very little
trustworthy data about the poet's life and Sufi connections that could clarify his Sufi
background. Secondly, we are left with only his collection of poems (*Dīwān*), as no
other writing from him has come to us that could help with the understanding of his
Sufi vision. Finally, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poetical language is a challenging test for any
reader. The Italian orientalist, Carlo Alfonso Nallino, confessed that for him Ibn al-
Fāriḍ's poetical language was «a continuous puzzle»; the British orientalist, Reynold
Alleyne Nicholson, noted that «much of it is enigmatic to the last degree», as if done
so as «to put to the test the cleverness of any reader»; and, finally, Arthur John
Arberry found it to be «a peculiarly stubborn problem[4]».

3. For further information about these authors see Giuseppe SCATTOLIN, «More on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Biog-
    raphy», in *MIDEO* 22 (1995) 197-242; id., «Realization of "Self" (*Anā*) in Islamic Mysticism: The
    Mystical Experience of 'Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ», in *Mélanges de l'Université St. Joseph*, (Beyrouth, Liban,
    Dar El-Machreq), Tome LIX (1995-1996) 1999, 119-148.
4. Carlo Alfonso NALLINO, «*Il poema mistico di Ibn al-Fāriḍ in una recente traduzione italiana*», in
    Raccolta di scritti editi ed inediti (Roma, Istituto per l'Oriente, 1940), vol. II, p. 193; Reynold Alleyne
    NICHOLSON, «*The Odes of Ibnu'l-Fāriḍ*», in *Studies in Islamic Mysticism* (Cambridge, University
    Press, 1921, repr. 1989), pp. 166-167; Arthur John ARBERRY, *The Poem of the Way*, in *Chester Beatty
    Monographs N° 5* (London, Emery Walker, 1952), p. 7.

In light of these difficulties, it appeared to me that the first step to be taken in approaching such a complicated text should be trying to understand the meaning of its terms in their specific context, *i.e.*, in the texture of the poem itself. In other words, one should try first to explain, as far as possible, «the text through the text itself», before resorting to any «foreign» interpretation or explanation that could jeopardize the contextual meaning of its terms, as has often been the case in ancient and recent attempts. For this reason, in my first study of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's great poem, *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā* (*The Great Tā'iyya*), the poem in which Ibn al-Fāriḍ has given the fullest expression of his mystical experience, I resorted to a semantic approach to it. Such an approach remains in my view the basic step to be taken for understanding any literary text. In such a semantic approach terms are situated in their reciprocal relationships, *i.e.* in their specific semantic fields, acquiring in this way their truest contextual meaning and offering in the end the key for a faithful understanding of the author's mind and vision[5]. On such premises, I carried out a thorough semantic analysis of *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā* 's text, starting by building up its «semantic vocabulary». As known, a «semantic vocabulary» is not just the arithmetical sum of the words of a text, but the sum of its words shown in the semantic relationships they have in the text and with the meaning they acquire in them. Thus, a semantic vocabulary shows the way words are organized according to the author's inner perception and vision as expressed in the fabric or texture of the text. Only on such a basis can one hope to approach the author's mind and vision. Such a semantic approach offers, in my view, a fuller clarification of the language of the poem, and thus one can reach an insight of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's interior vision and Sufi experience in a more precise and faithful way than what has been understood of him in the past[6].

1-2. The Levels of Reading and Understanding a Sufi Text.

On the basis of such work carried out on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's great poem, it appears to me that there are three basic stages or levels one should go through in reading and

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5.   For some more information about the semantic approach I refer to my research and to the bibliography mentioned in it, in particular to Izutsu Toshihiko, *God and Man in the Koran*, New York, Arno Press, repr. ed. 1980, (1ˢᵗ ed. Tokyo, Keio Institute, 1964), which has been an inspiring book for my research.

6.   See my doctoral research, Giuseppe Scattolin, *L'esperienza mistica di Ibn al-Fāriḍ attraverso il suo poema al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā. Un'analisi semantica del poema*, (Roma, Pisai, 1987), 3 vols. (not yet published), summarized in id., *L'esperienza mistica di Ibn al-Fāriḍ attraverso il suo poema al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā*, (Roma, Pisai, 1988); id., «L'expérience mystique de Ibn al-Fāriḍ à travers son poème *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā*», in *Mideo* 19 (1989) 203-223; id., «The Mystical Experience of 'Umar Ibn al-Fāriḍ or the Realization of Self (*Anā*, I)», in *The Muslim World*, LXXXII/3-4 (July-October, 1992) pp. 275-286.

interpreting any Sufi text in order to understand it on its «own terms», *i.e.* according to the meaning intended by the Sufi author him/herself, and not through concepts imported from outside. As known, most of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's commentators belonged to the Sufi school of his great contemporary, the Andalusian Sufi Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240), and from him they took their basic concepts to explain Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi poetry. This, however, appears to me quite a questionable approach to the Egyptian Sufi poet, because through it a number of Ibn al-'Arabī's ideas have been actually projected and read into Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verse without any textual evidence.

These three basic, necessary levels of reading and interpreting any Sufi text are, in my view: the contextual or synchronic level, the historical or diachronic level, the metahistorical or trascendental level[7].

a. The contextual or synchronic level.

This is the specific semantic approach of a literary text. At this level words are studied in their actual context, mutual connections and relationships, *i.e.* in their semantic fields in which they are knitted together in the fabric of the text. Such an approach helps the reader to grasp the meaning of a word, say *ḥubb*-love, the author had in mind in conceiving and composing the text. Further on, one should try to link together the semantic fields of the text, highlighting their reciprocal relationships through which the general structure of the text is shown. In this way the inner vision of the author comes to light. The final aim of such an analytic work, however, should be to point out in the end, as far as possible, the central focus-word (or may be a number of pivotal words) around which the whole semantic vocabulary of the text is organized, and through which the author's vision is shown in its inner unity and consistency. My semantic analysis of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi poem, the *Great Tā'iyya*, has been inspired to a great extent by the semantic approach of the Koranic text carried out by the Japanese scholar, Isutzu Toshihiko. As result of his research Isutzu Toshihiko could state that:

> «To say the truth, the word *Allāh* is the highest focus-word in the Koranic vocabulary, reigning over the entire domain. And this is nothing but the semantic aspect of what we generally mean by saying that the world of the Koran is essentially theocentric[8]».

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7. The distinction between the two linguistic levels, the synchronic and the diachronic, was put forward by the Swiss scholar Ferdinand DE SAUSSURE (1857-1913) in his lectures at the University of Geneva (1907-1911), posthumously published in 1916 under the title *Cours de linguistique générale*, 5th ed., Paris, 1955. The third level that reaches to the ontological dimensions of the mystical experience, called here metahistoric or trascendental, is a personal elaboration on some suggestions taken from Gaspare MURA, *Ermeneutica e verità. op. cit.*

8. TOSHIHIKO, *God and Man*, p. 31.

In a similar way, at the end of my semantic analysis of the *Great Tā'iyya*, I came to a parallel conclusion finding that the term *anā* (I, Myself) is the focus-word of the whole semantic vocabulary of the poem. This is actually the term that presides over all its semantic fields conferring them and the terms in them their specific contextual meaning. Thus, the vocabulary of the *Great Tā'iyya* appears to be essentially *self-(anā, I, Myself)*-centric, as much as the Koranic text appears to be essentially *theo-(Allāh, God)*-centric. Such a semantic analysis has achieved, in my view, the basic result of clarifying the vocabulary of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi poem, highlighting the meaning its terms have in its specific vocabulary through which the poet has expressed his Sufi experience. It has been pointed out above that only through the actual text of the poem can one have access to the poet's Sufi experience. Therefore, I believe that now, in the light of such an approach, one can have a better insight into Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi vision and experience, avoiding the danger of introducing «foreign concepts» into it, as has been the case for most of the past commentaries and studies.

A result of particular relevance of such a semantic approach has been also that of evidencing the role three terms play in the poem. These terms, which can be called its key terms, are actually used by Ibn al-Fāriḍ himself to designate the three main stages of his mystical experience; therefore, they are of particular importance in understanding his Sufi vision. They are:

1. *al-farq* (difference, division): This is the stage of «division», the first stage of the poet's mystical journey. In it the poet finds himself in a state of separation from his Beloved and expresses his feelings towards Her in the form of a dialogue. At this stage the language of love in the full extent of its erotic terminology prevails. Such an erotic language had become a common trait in Sufi literature since the III/IX c.

2. *al-ittiḥād* (unity-identity): This is the stage of «absolute unity», the second stage of the poet's mystical journey. The poet experiences now complete unity and identity with his Beloved, and, in the end, the absolute unity and identity with his own «self» (*anā*). Such an experience of unity-identity is expressed in well-knitted formulas through which the poet tries to convey his deep and new self-awareness: «I am She» (*anā iyyā-hā*), then, «She is I, Myself» (*hiya iyyā-ya*), and finally, reaching the apex of absolute self-identity, «I am I, Myself» (*anā iyyā-ya*).

3. *al-jam'* (union, the universal, all-comprehensive union): This is the third and the highest stage of the poet's mystical experience. At this stage, the Sufi poet experiences what he calls the «universal, all-comprehensive union» (*al-jam'*) with the Whole, in which he perceives (*shuhūd*) the synthesis of the One and the Many, the merging of his own Self (*anā*) into the Whole and the Whole into his Self.

One should note also that these three stages follow each other, or better they are interwoven into each other throughout the poem, as if in a progressive movement

towards the apex of the poet's mystical experience, *i.e.* the state of «the universal, all-comprehensive union» (*al-jamʿ*). Such a progressive movement represents the poet's inner journey in his search for and in his discovery of the truest dimensions and the deepest identity of his own Self (*anā*). This actually proves to be the focus-word of the whole vocabulary of the poem. In this way, Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical experience, as it shows in his great poem *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā*, appears to be a movement, or better a journey (*safar*), an expression common in the Sufis' imagery to describe their spiritual experience. Through such a journey the poet delves into the depths of his own Self (*anā*) to rise up to the unthought-of heights of the universal and all-comprehensive union (*al-jamʿ*).

   b. The historical or diachronic level.

However, the semantic or synchronic approach of a literary text, important as it is, does not yield the full extent and depth of its vocabulary. The terms and the words of the text must also be put in the frame of their historical development. Any language, in fact, and thus every specific domain of it, «the Sufi language» for instance, is not a static sum of words constituting a fixed whole that remains unvaried in time. On the contrary, linguistic research shows that each word undergoes a continuous transformation in meaning due to the ever new usages of it brought about by changes constantly taking place in its cultural milieu. Not only the single word is continuously changing in its meaning, but also the whole semantic system of a given vocabulary in which such a word is situated is in continual transformation. Actually, the whole vocabulary of any cultural milieu, as well as every specific domain of it, undergoes a permanent mutation: old elements keep dropping off, new elements keep coming in. Therefore, in order to fully understand the language of a given author, in our case Ibn al-Fāriḍ, one must try to situate his vocabulary within the history of his specific language. Ibn al-Fāriḍ comes, in fact, at a certain point of the history of the Sufi vocabulary, *i.e.* in the VII/XIII c. Therefore, his terms and expressions cannot be fully grasped outside their historical development and frame, or, say, outside the author's epistemological horizon. In fact, Ibn al-Fāriḍ proves to be quite knowledgeable of the Sufi literature before him; from it he took a number of basic concepts and terms. A good grasp of the whole background of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's historical vocabulary would be of tremendous help in pointing out to what extent he has been innovative in relation to the previous Sufi tradition, and to what extent he has been just repetitive. Thus, one can easily guess that «a comprehensive history of the Sufi language» would be of the greatest utility for this type of research. However, notwithstanding the lack of such a precious tool, at the end of my reseach I tried to draw up myself

the broad lines of the historical development of some important Sufi concepts, such as love (*ḥubb*), unity (*ittiḥād, waḥda*), the «Perfect Man» (*al-insān al-kāmil*), with which Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi experience is clearly connected. These constitute his historical background in the light of which his terms must be read and understood.

c. The metahistorical or transcendental level.

In the end, however, one must avow that both the synchronic and diachronic approaches do not reveal the whole depth of the mystical experience expressed in a given text. In fact, these two approaches are limited to what can be qualified as the «historical-phenomenological» level of understanding, which amounts in the end to a merely descriptive, exterior approach to the mystical, and thus the Sufi, experience. One has to proceed further to what may be called the «ontological level» (in the original meaning of the word, *onto-logos*, *i.e.*, understanding the existent at the level of «being»), where the deep meaning of a thing is perceived. This level can be named «metahistorical» or «transcendental», because by it one comes into touch with the dimensions of the human experience that transcend the pure phenomenological level, reaching into the depth of its ontological constitution or being. Any true mystical experience, and thus also the Sufi one, intends to be ultimately an «experience of God», of the Absolute Reality. God, the Absolute, has been called by many names in the different religious traditions, and the experience of Him has been described in manifold different ways. However, a true «mystical experience» must be, in its ultimate purpose, «an experience of the Absolute», or it is not «mystical» at all. Any true mystical experience in fact advances the claim of interpreting the human experience according to its utmost aim or goal, *i.e.* in the light of the Absolute Himself, beyond all levels of being. Therefore, the deepest meaning of any mystical experience, and thus of the Sufi experience, can only be grasped, in my view, when it is read at its transcendental level, *i.e.*, as an intepreter or hermeneutics of the human experience according to its ultimate meaning or purpose. Here, one has to go beyond the pure linguistic field entering into philosophical or theological dimensions to a level in which the help of these disciplines too is needed for a fuller understanding of a mystical text.

I do not intend to discuss here the various theories that have been put forward by the different schools of hermeneutics. Many of them would not agree with my way of reading and interpreting the mystical texts preferring to limit themself to the purely phenomenological level. However, I think that a mystical text cannot be seen as a mere product of the social and linguistic factors, in which the personality of the mystic is somehow obliterated or dissolved into impersonal cultural, social and religious

structures. Without denying the importance of these factors, all mystical experience, and thus also the Sufi one, appears to be, from what mystics narrate of themselves, a highly personal experience that can be only understood when read at its deepest level, *i.e.* as an experience of the Absolute, of God. This does not exclude, on the contrary it maintains that the mystical experience is necessarily mediated by the cultural horizons of the mystic's time; these, however, do not exhaust the full meaning of a true mystical experience. Therefore, if we want to grasp the mystic's total epistemological horizon we have always to consider it under both dimensions, the cultural-historical and the personal-transcendental. In fact, according to what mystics relate of their actual experience, coming close to God, the Absolute, is never just a general, common «datum», available to all at all times. On the contrary, such an experience appears to be always a highly personal, not interchangeable encounter, achieved most of the time through dramatic and arduous personal struggles. In fact, it is in front of the Absolute that the mystic discovers his deepest identity and touches his truest «personal» factor, which is always unique and irrepeatable for each human being. Consequently, only at such a level a mystical text, thus also a Sufi one, can be fully understood. And only at this level the two epistemological horizons, the mystic's and ours, can really meet or, better, they attempt to merge into a new, comprehensive epistemological horizon, leading to a new understanding not only of the mystic's particular experience, but also of the human experience in general. This is the «onto-logical» level, *i.e.* the comprehension of «being» through an experience by which it reveals its deepest dimensions. In the end, I think that only at such level a true comparison among different mystical experiences can be made, showing possible similarities but without obliterating the differences existing among the particular epistemological horizons of each of them.

Moreover, one can easily conjecture that a deep personal experience, such as the mystical one, must be necessarily reflected at the linguistic level in the structure and mode of the mystic's vocabulary. Isutzu Toshihiko remarks that: «... every system worthy of the name must have a patterning principle on which it is based», and about the Koranic vocabulary he points out that:

> «... the whole system of the Koranic concepts comprising within itself all the layers of associative connection is based on a pattern which is peculiar to the Koranic thought, *i.e.*, which makes the latter essentially different from all non-Koranic systems of concepts, whether Islamic or non-Islamic[9]».

This is what another well known linguistic scholar, Edward Sapir, calls the «structural genius» of a linguistic system, that is «a basic plan», «a certain cut» or, one

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9. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

could say, «a fundamental mode», which overrules and determines the nature and the dynamics of a given linguistic system in general, as well as of a particular field of it, such as the Koranic or the Sufi one. Thus, Toshihiko concludes saying that:

> «To isolate this fundamental plan, or as Sapir himself has named it, the «structural genius» governing the nature and working mechanism of the whole Koranic system must constitute the ultimate aim of a semanticist approaching this Scripture, as long as he understands the discipline of semantics as a cultural science. For only when we succeed in doing this, can we hope to succeed in bringing to light the *Weltanschauung* of the Koran, which will, philosophically, be nothing other than the very «Koranic ontology»…[10]».

Such an approach proves to be valid not only for a given language in general or a particular field of it, but also for a particular author, in our instance Ibn al-Fāriḍ. In fact, the «structural genius» of a language derives from the basic experience upon which this language and its vocabulary have been built. Therefore, understanding the inner structure of the vocabulary of a given text highlighting its «structural genius» means getting an insight into the frontal experience on which the author has built his particular vocabulary. In this way one can obtain, as far as possible, a truer and fuller understanding of the author's vision and experience, in our case of the Egyptian Sufi poet, Ibn al-Fāriḍ.

The semantic analysis I carried out on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's text showed beyond doubt that the term *anā* (I, Myself) is the central focus word on which the whole poet's linguistic system is built, being the absolute focus-word of his whole vocabulary. Therefore, the term *anā* (I, Myself) must be considered the «structural genius» of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's vocabulary, around which this has been organized, and, thus, the key term for understanding his Sufi experience. In the light of all this, I could conclude my research saying:

> «…the core of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical experience must be sought, first of all, in the poet's personal and deep assimilation of the concept of the «Perfect Man» (*al-insān al-kāmil*). Through such a realization, the poet has reached full awareness of having attained his most profound aspiration, the source of all mystical experience, namely, union with the Absolute. He found that his empirical «self» (*anā*), perceived (*wujūd*) at the beginning of the path in the stage of multiplicity and duality (*farq*), has passed away into the pure vision and transparency (*shuhud*) of the true, unique «Self» (*anā*), the absolute One. Now, in this stage of universal and all-comprehensive union (*jamʿ*), the poet experiences only one absolute «Self» (*anā*), which is the unique center and source of all qualities and movements in the universe. Into this absolute «Self» (*anā*) the poet has completely merged, with no traces left of his previous, empirical «self» (*anā*). In such a new, transparent awareness (*shuhūd*) the Sufi poet realizes that whatever is said or done in the uni-

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10. *Ibid.*, p. 35.

verse, is so by that One and Absolute Subject, the unique Center of All, the only One who can say in Reality «*anā*» (I, Myself)[11]».

It has been on the basis of such an hermeneutical approach, going through the three levels of textual analysis (the contextual-synchronic, the historical-diachronic and the transhistorical-transcendental) that I tried to interpret and understand Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poetry and Sufi experience.

However, in the end one should always avow that, dealing with mystical experience, one crosses over into the world of silence, the mystical silence, since a true experience of the Absolute can never be really and totally expressed in human words. Human words and linguistic forms are for mystics just traces and pointers to indicate a Reality that always exceeds and transcends all human understanding and linguistic expression.

Thus, at the end of my analysis of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi experience I had to say:

«Ultimately, however, in spite of all effort, one has to acknowledge that the Sufi poet took with him the secret of his mystical experience as he returned through the silence of death towards the mysterious sources of his mystical journey: that "Sea of love and friendship" and that "bounteous and unlimited Ocean" in which he found his true, real "Self" (*anā*). He left us his poems to be read simply as traces (*āthār*) of a path to follow (*The Order of the Way*, this is in fact the meaning of one of the titles of the poem) towards that transcendent and ultimate Reality in which he found his utmost fulfillment[12]».

In the light of this fact, it appears to me that the verses written a century after the poet's death by his grandson, ʿAlī *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ (d. ca. 735/1335), for his grandfather's shrine may well express something of the depth and the mystery of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's mystical experience[13]:

Pass by the cemetery at the foot of al-ʿĀriḍ,
Say: Peace upon you, O Ibn al-Fāriḍ!
In your *Naẓm al-sulūk* you have shown marvels,
and revealed a deep, well-guarded mystery.
You have drunk from the Sea of love and friendship,
and quaffed from a bounteous, unlimited Ocean.

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11. *The Dīwān*, p. 10 (English text).
12. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 4; these verses are found in ʿAlī *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ's biographical introduction (*Dībādjā*) of *The Dīwān*, p. 9 (Arabic text); *Naẓm al-sulūk* is the title of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's great poem commonly known as *al-Tāʾiyyat al-kubrā*.

2. About the Text of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*[14].

2-1. The Quest for Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*.

Interpreting a Sufi text, as well as any other literary work, presupposes, quite obviously, that one is in possession of the authentic text, the one that actually goes back to the author. However, even such an important point seems to be often forgotten, in Sufi literature in particular. Not many are the true critical editions in this field and, though a lot of Sufi compositions are available in the Sufi book market, most of them have been published without any genuine critical research; an urgency is badly felt in this respect. My first study of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* has been based on the last critical edition available at the time, the one worked out by ʿAbd al-Khāliq Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Khāliq (Cairo, 1984). Later on, I realized that such an edition had not been carried out with sufficient accuracy, and that the question of the text of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* had to be addressed anew.

ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ is well-known as one of the most outstanding Sufi poets in Arabic and Sufi literature and he has been celebrated with the high title «Prince of lovers» (*sulṭān al-ʿāshiqīn*). Born in Cairo on the 4th of Dhū al-Qaʿda 576/22nd March 1181, he was introduced at an early age into the Sufi life by his father, ʿAlī b. al-Murshid. Ibn al-Fāriḍ's father was from Ḥamāt (Syria) but moved to Cairo where he worked as a jurisconsult in legal matters, especially in fixing the legal shares (*furūḍ*) due to women on the part of their men in matters of inheritance. Because of this job he became known as *al-Fāriḍ*, and thus his son ʿUmar was called «Ibn al-Fāriḍ». After a time of wandering retreats (*siyāḥa*) along the Muqaṭṭam mountains, East of Cairo, and following the advice of a wandering Sufi, called *shaykh* al-Baqqāl, Ibn al-Fāriḍ went to Mecca to obtain the Sufi revelation (*fatḥ*). There he stayed for around fifteen years, between ca. 613/1216-628/1231. In the solitudes of the mountains and the valleys surrounding the holy city Ibn al-Fāriḍ completed his Sufi experience, achieving his spiritual ascension (*miʿrāj*) and obtaining the sought after Sufi revelation (*fatḥ*).

Back in Cairo, Ibn al-Fāriḍ continued his Sufi way of life, living in seclusion, as did his father, near al-Azhar mosque, in a place called «the House of Preachers» (*Dār al-khaṭāba*). His renown both as a holy Sufi and an eminent poet spread throughout Egypt attracting the attention of many, reaching the Ayyubid sultan of the time, al-Malik al-Kāmil (d. 635/1238). Ibn al-Fāriḍ, however, refused any link with the sultan's court. In fact, his main concern in the last period of his life, around four years, was

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14. I report here with some slight changes what I have written about this question in the introduction of my critical edition, *The Dīwān*, pp. 12-26.

the collection and the transmission of his poems, composed partly in the Ḥijāz and partly in Cairo.

Ibn al-Fāriḍ passed away in Cairo, on Tuesday, the 2nd of Djumādā al-Ūlā 632/23rd January 1235. He was fifty-four years old. He was buried at the foot of al-Muqaṭṭam hills, East of Cairo, beneath a mosque named al-'Āriḍ, because of the name of the place. Ibn al-Fāriḍ's shrine (*ḍarīḥ*), in time enlarged and embellished by many sultans, has been preserved to the present day, and is still an attractive centre for his devotees, especially on his feast day (*mawlid*)[15].

Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi poems (*Dīwān*) have become quite soon very popular in Sufi and literary circles throughout the Islamic world. Thus, it is not surprising to find an impressive number of manuscripts and, later on, of printed editions in a great variety of places and times[16].

Up to recent times all the known manuscripts as well as all the current printed editions of the *Dīwān* have been based on the recension worked out a century after the poet's death, around 733/1333, by Ibn al-Fāriḍ's grandson, 'Alī *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ. This grandson also wrote a biographical introduction to the *Dīwān*, commonly known as *Dībāja* (lit. «precious ornament», a name by which the preface of a book was often called) of the *Dīwān*. 'Alī depicts his grandfather as the highest type of the holy person (*walī*), endowed with all kinds of supernatural graces and powers (*karāmāt*). 'Alī's recension has become in time the *textus receptus* or the authentic recension of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*. It consists of twenty-six odes and some miscellaneous texts, on the whole of ca. 1659 verses. A number of textual variants were noted since early times, but they have been accepted as normal accidents in the transmission of an Arabic text. Actually, at the beginning of his *Dībāja*, 'Alī himself complains that his grandfather's *Dīwān* had undergone by his time a fair amount of alterations due to «the confusion on the part of the copyists (*al-nussākh*)». This was the reason, as he says, that pushed him to work out his own edition of the *Dīwān* in order to counter such alterations. 'Alī's recension has become in time most popular throughout the Islamic world and has been accepted as the faithful transmission of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*[17].

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15. For more on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's biography see Issa J. BOULLATA, «Toward a Biography of Ibn al-Fāriḍ (576-632 AH/1181-1235 AD)», in *Arabica* 28/1 (1981) 38-56; Thomas Emil HOMERIN, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn al-Fāriḍ, His Verse and His Shrine*, (1st ed. 1994; 2nd ed., Cairo - New York: The American University in Cairo Press, 2001); Giuseppe SCATTOLIN, «More on Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Biography», *op. cit.*; for a description of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *mawlid* see Pierre-Jean LUIZARD, «Un *mawlid* particulier», in *Égypte/Monde Arabe*, (Le Caire, CEDEJ) 14 (2ème Trimestre 1993) 79-102.

16. A survey of manuscripts and editions of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* is given in Giuseppe SCATTOLIN, «Towards a Critical Edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Dīwān», in *Annales Islamologiques* (Le Caire, IFAO) 35 (2001) 503-547.

17. For the text of the *Dūbādja*, see, pp. 1-34 (Arabic text).

The first to put into question 'Alī's recension was the British scholar, Arthur John Arberry (d. 1973). He happened to find in the Chester Beatty Collection of Arabic Manuscripts (Dublin) a manuscript of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* dated between 691-701/ 1292-1302, *i.e.* some forty years before 'Alī's recension, at the time the oldest known text of the *Dīwān*. This manuscript bore witness to a transmission of the text different from 'Alī's recension. In it only fifteen odes are recorded with no mention either of the *Dībāja* or of the rest of the poems recorded in 'Alī's recension. The manuscript of the Chester Beatty Collection was the first evidence of an earlier transmission of the *Dīwān* independent from that of 'Alī *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ. Due to the importance of the find, in 1952 Arberry published the whole text in transliteration, and later on he translated it into English[18]. This manuscript proved to be such an excellent recension of the *Dīwān* that Arberry concluded: «We are left with these fourteen odes [fifteen, adding the *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā* published separately], as constituting the genuine and indisputable core of the *corpus* [of the *Dīwān*][19]».

Arberry's hypothesis received an unexpected confirmation when I happened to find by chance (or say by *baraka*) in Konya (Turkey) an unpublished manuscript of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* which should be dated around 651/1253, *i.e.* some forty years before that of the Chester Beatty Collection. The Konya manuscript witnesses to the same transmission of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* as that of the Chester Beatty Collection manuscript: the text consists of only fifteen odes[20]. The same textual transmission found new evidence in two other manuscripts I examined later on, one from the Oriental Manuscript Institute of Leiden (Holland), Or. 2693, dated before 757/1356, and another from the Staatsbibliothek of Berlin (Germany), Sprenger 1120, dated before 813/1410. All these manuscripts, which are among the oldest ones extant, bear witness to a transmission of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* older than 'Alī's recension and different from it. This older textual transmission has only fifteen odes, with no mention either of 'Alī's *Dībāja* or of other poems recorded by him in his edition of his grandfather's *Dīwān*.

With such an accumulating evidence, the question of the authenticity of the text of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* had to be taken into serious consideration, and the need of a

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18. Arthur John ARBERRY, *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, edited in transcription from the oldest extant manuscript in the Chester BEATTY Collection, Chester BEATTY Monographs n° 4, (London, Emery WALKER, 1952); he translated the *Great Tā'iyya* in *The Poem of the Way*, translated into English verse from the Arabic of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Chester Beatty Monographs n° 5, (London, Emery Walker, 1952); and the rest of the poems in *The Mystical Poems of Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, translated and annotated, Chester Beatty Monographs n° 6, (Dublin, Emery Walker, 1956).

19. ARBERRY, *The Mystical Poems*, (Dublin, 1956), p. 6.

20. A full report and description of the Konya manuscript is given in Giuseppe SCATTOLIN, «The Oldest Text of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*: A Manuscript of Yusufadja Kütüphanesi of Konya», in *MIDEO* 24 (2000), pp. 81-111.

new critical edition became imperative. To start with, I carried out a general survey of the manuscripts of the *Dīwān* found in some of the most important libraries in the East and the West, and they amount to quite a large number, as I have shown in a report on them[21]. Among them I chose, on the ground of their dates, the most relevant ones, twenty-five in all, and out of these I selected eight manuscripts which represent the earliest transmission of the text. All of them are unedited manuscripts, except that of the Chester Beatty Collection, edited by Arberry in 1952. Two of these manuscripts, namely that of Konya and that of the Chester Beatty Collection, are from the VII/XIII century and are up to the present the oldest known manuscripts of the *Dīwān*; three are from the VIII/XIV, and three from the IX/XV century. In this way, the transmission of the text during the first three centuries after Ibn al-Fāriḍ's death is well documented[22].

However, for a more comprehensive view of transmission of the *Dīwān*'s text, I thought it useful to collate these first eight manuscripts with the most important modern editions of it[23]. These too are based on a variety of manuscripts found in the East, though not mentioned by their editors. In this way, the reader may easily compare the first historical evidence of the text with its latest transmission. Based on such an ample textual survey, the critical edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* I present is established on fairly extensive and substantial historical evidence. In the future, I, or someone else, will surely be able to examine other material to complete the present work.

In conclusion, the research of the textual transmission of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* has fully confirmed Arberry's hypothesis that the first fifteen odes must be considered the true core or the *corpus* of the *Dīwān*. On the contrary, many doubts arise about the authenticity of the second part of it added by 'Alī *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ a century after the poet's death. In fact, these latter additions do not exist in the oldest manuscripts of the *Dīwān*, and their style and contents are on the whole quite inferior to the first part of it. Many verses of this second part seem to be just an imitation of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poetry worked out either by 'Alī himself, as he explicitly declares for some of them, or by some of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's admirers and friends. 'Alī himself declares that he collected these verses from different sources, and so many of them are in all probability spurious. Some verses may have been composed by the poet himself, but perhaps not polished into their final form and so left in the possession of his family. Later on, these verses were collected, polished and edited by his grandson or by some of his close friends (*aṣḥāb*), as 'Alī himself reports. The question of their authenticity re-

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21. G. SCATTOLIN, «Towards a Critical Edition», *op. cit.*, Appendix I, pp. 531-541.
22. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, Appendix II, pp. 542-547.
23. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 519-530.

mains open, and in any case they should be accepted only if supported by solid internal evidence of language, style and content, and not merely on the ground of 'Alī *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ's witness.

2-2. The New Critical Edition of the *Dīwān*: Manuscripts and Printed Editions.

A full description of the manuscripts and the printed editions used in my critical edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* has been given in a separate article[24]. Here I just report the list of them arranged in chronological order, with the symbols used in our critical edition, and with their titles, places and dates of their writing or printing.

a. The Texts in Chronological Order:

a-1. The Manuscripts:

1. K (Konya): Yusufadja Kütüphanesi No. 7838/12 (Konya), *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*; to be dated between 640-673 H/1242-1274 AD (probably before 651/1253).

2. Cb (Chester Beatty): Manuscript of Chester Beatty Collection, Arabic MS 3643 (Dublin), *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*; dated 691-701 H/1292-1302 AD.

3. Sl (Süleimaniye Laleli): Süleimaniye Laleli 1340 (Istanbul), *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā*; dated 752 H/1351 AD.

4. L (Leiden): Department of Oriental Manuscripts, Or. 2693, Oriental Institute, Rijksuniversiteit, Leiden (Holland): *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*; dated before the middle of Rabī' al-Awwal, 757 H/March, 1356 AD.

5. Sf (Süleimaniye Fatih): Süleimaniye Fatih 3766 (Istanbul), *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*; dated the 19th Ramaḍān, 786 H/4th November, 1384 AD.

6. Bs (Berlin Sprenger): Staatsbibliotek zu Berlin, Sprenger 1120: *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*; dated the 20th Rabī' al-Ākhar, 813 H/21st August, 1410 AD.

7. Sa (Süleimaniye Ayasofya): Süleimaniye Ayasofya 1994 Mükdrel (Istanbul): *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā*; dated the 11th Sha'bān, 875 H/2nd February, 1471 AD.

8. Sk (Süleimaniye Kadizade): Süleimaniye Kadizade Mehmet Ef. 387 (Istanbul), *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*; dated the 20th Dhū-l-Qa'da, 883 H/13th February, 1479 AD.

a-2. The Printed Editions

1. Z (Zuwaytīnī's edition): *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, edited by *al-shaykh* 'Uqayl al-Zawaytīnī, lithography, Aleppo, 1257/1841.

2. D (Daḥdāḥ's edition): *Sharḥ Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ li-l-shaykh Ḥasan al-Būrīnī wa-li-l-shaykh 'Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī*, edited by Rushayd b. Ghālib al-Daḥdāḥ,

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24. *Ibid.*, *op. cit.*, pp. 505-530.

Maṭbaʿat Arnūd wa-Shurakā-hu (sic), Marsiliya (Marseille), 1853. The text and commentary are taken from that of Ḥasan al-Būrīnī (d. 1024/1615), with the addition of some excerpta from ʿAbd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī's (d. 1143/30) commentary.

3. H (Hammer's edition of al-Tāʾiyyat al-kubrā): Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, Das arabische hohe Lied der Liebe, das ist Ibnol Fáridh's Táïjet, in Text und Übersetzung zum ersten Male, Wien, Kaiserl., Königl., Hof-und-Staatdrückerei, 1854. The text of the poem is taken from the commentary of Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350) who was a disciple of ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 730/1330), and of al-Qūnawī (d. ca. 700/1300), himself a disciple of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 673/1274).

4. S (Ṣābūndjī's edition): Kitāb Dīwān al-imām al-shaykh Abī Ḥafṣ Sharaf al-Dīn ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ, edited by Louis Ṣābūndjī, Beirut, al-Maṭbaʿat al-Waṭaniyya, 1285/1868.

5. Nb (Daḥdāḥ's corrected edition): Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Cairo, printed probably in Maṭbaʿat Būlāq (Egypt), 1289/1872.

6. Fa (Farghānī's Arabic Commentary of al-Tāʾiyyat al-kubrā): Saʿīd al-Dīn al-Farghānī, Muntahā al-madārik wa-muntahā lubbi kulli kāmilin wa-ʿārifin wa-sālikin, Maktab al-Ṣanāʾiʿ [Istanbul], 1293/1876, 2 vols.; Saʿīd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 699/1300) was a disciple of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī.

7. Ka (al-Kāshānī's Commentary of al-Tāʾiyyat al-kubrā): ʿAbd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī, Kashf al-wujūhi al-ghurr li-māʿānī naẓmi al-durr; the only printed edition of al-Kāshānī's commentary is found in the margin of a corrected Cairene reprint of Daḥdāḥ's edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's minor poems done in Cairo, Maṭbaʿat al-Khayriyya, November 1310/1892, 2 vols.; Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 730/1330) was a disciple of al-Djandī, who was himself a disciple of Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī.

8. B (Beirut edition): Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Beirut, 1899; the variants are quoted from Arberry's edition of the poems.

9. T (Ṭawfīq's edition): Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ, edited by Maḥmūd Ṭawfīq, Cairo, s.d. (probably the beginning of the XXth century); the variants are quoted from Arberry's edition of the poems.

10. N (Daḥdāḥ's corrected edition): corrected Daḥdāḥ's edition, Cairo, 1319/1901; the variants are quoted from Arberry's edition of the poems.

11. Kh (Khūrī's edition): Amīn al-Khūrī, Djalāʾ al-ghāmid fī sharḥ Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Beirut, Maktabat al-Ādāb, 1910, text and commentary. This is the fifth and most complete edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Dīwān edited by Amīn al-Khūrī; he had edited Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Dīwān several times [before], the first time in 1886.

12. Fp (Farghānī's Persian Commentary of al-Tāʾiyyat al-kubrā): Mashāriq al-darārī. Sharḥ Tāʾiyya Ibn al-Fāriḍ. Taʾlīf Saʿīd al-Dīn Saʿīd Farghānī, edited and com-

mented upon by Sayyid Jalāl al-Dīn Ashtiyānī, Anjuman-i Falsafah-i wa-ʿIrfān-i Is-lām, Mashhad (Irān), 1398/1978.

13. Aq (ʿAbd al-Khāliq's edition): *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, edited by ʿAbd al-Khāliq Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Khāliq, Dār al-Maʿārif, Cairo, 1984; id., *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, edited by ʿAbd al-Khāliq Maḥmūd ʿAbd al-Khāliq, Cairo, ʿAyn li-l-Dirāsāt wa-l-Buḥūth al-Ijtimāʿiyya wa-l-Insāniyya, 1995; this last edition includes ʿAbd al-Khāliq's study of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's poetry published earlier as, *Shiʿr Ibn al-Fāriḍ fī dhawq al-adabī al-ḥadīth*, Cairo, Dār al-Maʿārif, 1984.

b. Grouping of the Texts According to Their Affinities:

At present it is difficult to draw up a full picture of the stem families of the manu-scripts of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*. Through our editing work I could point out only some affinities existing among some texts, with no clear indication of direct interde-pendence. Thus, here the list of the texts is given grouping them according to their textual affinities and their chronological order. In the same order they appear in the apparatus of this new critical edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*. The different groups are delimited by two dashes -.... -, and the texts are indicated with the symbols men-tioned above. In this way the reader can get an idea of the connections existing among texts.

b-1. The 15 texts used for the minor odes:

K Cb - L Sf Bs Sk - D N Nb - Z S - Kh B T - Aq

b-2. The 18 texts used for *al-Tāʾiyyat al-kubrā*:

K Cb - Sl L Sf Bs Sa Sk - H Fa Fp Ka - Z S - Kh B T - Aq

c. Remarks on the Texts.

I. K Cb are the most ancient witnesses of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*. There are a number of affinities between them, but also many discrepancies. The reason seems to lie in the fact that Cb had access to a wider range of textual transmission than K. These two manuscripts represent the oldest and surest witnesses of the text.

II. The group Sl L Sf Bs Sa Sk is not homogeneous. Sf Sk show strong affinities and they are surely interrelated, and were written probably in Egypt because of the presence of Egyptian colloquial forms in them. The other texts show both affinities

and discrepancies. Among them all L is surely the most reliable one, but also Sa is an accurate and quite reliable edition of the *al-Tā'iyyat al-kubrā*. Thus, L and Sa are next to K and Cb quite trustworthy witnesses of the text.

iii. D N Nb are the same edition of the text, N and Nb being just corrected editions of D which is full of mistakes.

iv. The group H Fa Fp Ka shows a certain degree of affinity. The reason for this should be found in the fact that they all are related to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī's Sufi school which goes from Ibn al-'Arabī (d. 638/1240) to Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, (d. 673/1274), to Sa'īd al-Dīn al-Farghānī (d. 699/1300) and al-Djandī (d. ca. 700/1300), to 'Abd al-Razzāq al-Kāshānī (d. 730/1330), to Sharaf al-Dīn Dāwūd al-Qayṣarī (d. 751/1350), to Badr al-Dīn al-Būrīnī (d. 1024/1615) and, eventually, to 'Abd al-Djānī al-Nābulusī (d. 1143/1731).

v. Z S show strong affinities to the point that one can consider them as coming from the same textual transmission. The same can be said of Kh B T. All these texts, Z S Kh B T, seem to be variants of a transmission of the text common in the Syrian-Lebanese area. Kh is surely among them all the most accurate and reliable.

vi. Aq shows some affinities with Z S Kh B T, but has many variants of its own; it seems to be on the whole an independent transmission of the text found in the East. Aq intended to be a critical edition of the *Dīwān*, but it has a lot of mistakes and therefore is not wholly reliable.

2-3. Conclusion: Starting from an «Archeology» of the Text.

On the basis of the textual evidence collected from the manuscripts and the printed editions we are confident of being able to offer a fairly good critical edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*. Since no «autograph» from Ibn al-Fāriḍ himself has come to us (and probably there is none, unless an unforeseeable *coup de fortune* would solve the problem at its roots!), for the time being one has to rely only on the historical witnesses of its textual transmission. Thus, my basic aim in editing Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* has been in the first place to collect the most reliable historical evidence for it, or, in other words, to carry out a sort of «archeology» of the text. Only by going through such an archeological work can one hope to approach the original text of the *Dīwān* with a reasonable degree of confidence.

In conclusion, the text of this new critical edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* is based first of all on the oldest and the best witness of it that has come to us, *i.e.* the Konya manuscript (K), of which I offer my thorough and attentive reading. In the footnotes, the list of all the variants (grammatical and other linguistic mistakes included) found in later manuscripts as well as in modern editions is given. These variants are, in my mind, witnesses of «possible readings» of the text and have important historical and linguistic value (mistakes included). For this reason, following the principle

that nothing should be thrown away from an archeological site, I have registered everything found in these historical witnesses of the text, also grammatical and other linguistic mistakes. As said above, after the Konya manuscript (K), the texts of Cb, L, Sa, Kh are on the whole the most reliable transmissions of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān*. Nonetheless, the other witnesses too (with their mistakes!) must be considered variant readings of a difficult text which remains open to different approaches and interpretations, since, as Nicholson warned, it seems to have been intended «to put to the test the cleverness of any reader».

In this way, the reader can have a fairly comprehensive view of the way the text has been read, interpreted and transmitted in time, as the subtitle of the present edition says: «readings of its text throughout history». It is only on such historical evidence or, say, on such textual archeology, that a new reading of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* will be possible, based on a careful and intelligent choice among its «historical» witnesses and guided by the Sufi and literary taste (*dhawq*) of the reader.

In conclusion, the present critical edition of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's *Dīwān* is offered as a starting point for a new and more scientific approach to it. On the basis of the present edition, I hope to resume and revise my first work on it, that is its semantic analysis and Sufi hermeneutics.

APPENDIX

The Order of the Poems Found in the Texts Used for the Present Edition of the *Dīwān*.

a. The First Part of the *Dīwān*:

1 - K - L	2 - Sf - Sk – Aq	3 - Kh-B-T-Z-S
-------	*Dībāja*	*Dībāja* (only in Z)
1. *Sāʾiqa*	1. *Sāʾiqa*	1. *Sāʾiqa*
2. *Ṣaddun*	2. *Ṣaddun*	2. *Ṣaddun*
3. *Naʿm*	3. *Naʿm*	3. *Naʿm*
4. *Saqat-nī*	4. *Saqat-nī*	4. *Saqat-nī*
5. *Araju*	5. *Araju*	5. *Araju*
6. *A wamīḍu*	6. *A wamīḍu*	6. *A wamīḍu*
7. *Hal nāru*	7. *Hal nāru*	7. *Mā bayna dāli*
8. *Khaffifi*	8. *Khaffifi*	8. *Hal nāru*
9. *Sharibnā*	9. *Huwa*	9. *Khaffifi*
10. *Mā bayna muʿtaraki*	10. *Sharibnā*	10. *Huwa*

11. *Iḥfaẓ*	11. *Mā bayna muʿtaraki*	11. *Sharibnā*
12. *Tih*	12. *Iḥfaẓ*	12. *Mābayna muʿtaraki*
13. *Adir*	13. *Qalb-ī*	13. *Iḥfaẓ*
14. *Qalb-ī*	14. *Tih*	14. *Qalb-ī*
15. *Huwa*	15. *Adir*	15. *Tih*
- *al-Dūbayt*		16. *Adir*
- *Djillaqu* (only in L)		
- *al-Alghāz*		

4 - Bs	5 - Cb	6 - D - N - Nb
-------	-------	*Dībāja*
1. *Sāʾiqa*	1. *Araju*	1. *Sāʾiqa*
2. *Ṣaddun*	2. *Mā bayna muʿtaraki*	2. *Ṣaddun*
3. *Araju*	3. *A wamīḍu*	3. *Naʿm*
3. *Araju*	3. *A wamīḍu*	3. *Naʿm*
4. *A wamīḍu*	4. *Khaffifi*	4. *Qalb-ī*
5. *Hal nāru*	5. *Ṣaddun*	5. *Tih*
6. *Khaffifi*	6. *Iḥfaẓ*	6. *Zid-nī*
7. *Sharibnā*	7. *Qalb-ī*	7. *Mā bayna dāli*
8. *Mā bayna muʿtaraki*	8. *Tih*	8. *Iḥfaẓ*
9. *Iḥfaẓ*	9. *Huwa*	9. *Araju*
10. *Adir*	10. *Sharibnā*	10. *A wamīḍu*
11. *Qalb-ī*	11. *Adir*	11. *Hal nāru*
12. *Huwa*	12. *Hal nāru*	12. *Mā bayna muʿtaraki*
13. *Tih*	13. *Sāʾiqa*	13. *ḥaffifi*
- *al-Alghāz*	14. *Naʿm*	14. *Arā l-buʿda*
- *jillaqu*	15. *Saqat-nī*	15. *Huwa*
- *al-Dūbayt*	- *al-Dūbayt*	16. *A barqun badā*
14. *Naʿm*	- *al-Alghāz*	17. *Adir*
15. *Saqat-nī*		18. *Qif bi-l-diyāri*
		19. *Sharibnā*

Nb. This first part is found in the most ancient manuscritpts **K - Cb - L - Bs**. In **Kh - B - T - Z - S-D - N - Nb** some odes (underlined) are taken from the second part of the *Dīwān* and added into the first. ʿAlī's *Dībāja* is found only in **Sf - Sk - Z - D -N - Nb - Aq**.

b. The Second Part of the *Dīwān*:

1 - Sf - Sk - Z - Aq	2 - S - Kh	3 - D - N - Nb
16. *A barqun badā* *		
(of ʿAlî *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ)	17. *A barqun badā*	
17. *Djayr-ī*	18. *Zid-nī*	
	19. *Arāl-buʿda*	
	20. *Nasakhtu*	
	21. *Antum furūḍ-ī*	
18. *Djillaqu*	22. *Qif bi-l-diyārī*	20. *al-Aljāz*
19. *al-Dūbayt*	23. *Ushāhidu*	21. *al-Dūbayt*
20. *al-Alghāz*	24. *ghayr-ī*	22. *Miscellanea*
21. *Miscellanea*		23. *Djillaqu*
22. *A barqun badā*		
(the original of Ibn al-Fāriḍ)		
23. *Mā bayna ḍāli*	25. *Djillaqu*	
24. *Zid-nī*	26. *al-Dūbayt*	
25. *Arā l-buʿda*	27. *al-Alghāz*	
26. *Nasakhtu*	28. *Miscellanea*	24. *Nasakhtu*
27. *Antum furūd-ī*		25. *Antum furūḍ-ī*
28. *Qif bi-l-diyāri*		26. *Ushāhidu*
29. *Ushāhidu*	29. *Nashartu*	27. *A barqun badā**
30. *Nashartu*	30. *A barqun badā**	28. *Nashartu*

Remarks on the texts

a. The compositions of this second part are classified continuing the numeration of the first, that is from number fifteen on.

b. The texts of **Sf - Sk - Z - Aq** seem to be the most trustworthy witnesses of the first transmission of this second part of the *Dīwān*. In many modern printed editions, such as **S** and **Kh**, the order has been changed without apparent reason; in **D - N - Nb** the first and the second part are mixed together.

c. The ode *A barqun badā* signed with * (*A barqun badā**) indicates the ode composed by ʿAlī sibṭ Ibn al-Fāriḍ on a verse he remembered from his grandfather, as he says in his *Dībāja*. The same ode without * (*A barqun baā*) indicates the ode ʿAlī attributes to his grandfather.

d. In Z S Kh the ode *Mā bayna ḍāli* is reported in the first part of the *Dīwān* after A *wamīḍu* and the *Miscellanea* are mixed up with the couplets (*al-Dūbayt*).

e. The ode *ghayrī* is found after *Ushāhidu* in Z, and in Aq at the end of the *Dīwān* because, he says, it is not found in the older manuscript (dated 804/1402) he used, but only in the later Mss. The ode is missing in D - N - Nb. The same ode *Ghayrī* has been attributed also to a younger contemporary of Ibn al-Fāriḍ, Bahā' al-Dīn Zuhayr (581-656/1185-1258). It shows a poetic style and language quite different from the rest of the *Dīwān* and, therefore, it is with all probability spurious.

f. S does not report the odes *Nashartu* - *A barqun badā* * and *Miscellanea*; he concludes the *Dīwān* with a composition of his own in praise of a niece of his.

In conclusion, it has been remarked that the transmission of this second part of the *Dīwān* is not as reliable as the first. In fact, it looks like a heap of different pieces of poetry put together (*ta'līf*, this is the term used in the Mss) by the poet's grandson, 'Alī *sibṭ* Ibn al-Fāriḍ. On the whole, its style and the contents prove largely inferior to the first fifteen odes. In spite of these doubts, I have edited it too (with 'Alī's *Dībāja*) as part of the historical legacy and tradition that in time grew around Ibn al-Fāriḍ's Sufi poetry. Besides, some verses of this part may even be authentic, but, as noted earlier, their authenticity should be accepted only if based on solid linguistic and conceptual grounds.

On the whole, the *Dīwān* of Ibn al-Fāriḍ contains around 1659 verses of which 1512 vv. constitute the first fifteen odes, while 147 vv. are found in the second part of the *Dīwān*. In addition to these verses, there is a fluctuating number of couplets and riddles also ascribed to Ibn al-Fāriḍ. In the present edition the poems have been classified with a number, indicating their order in the manuscripts adopted as the basic reference of the text (K for the first fifteen odes, Sf - Sk - Aq for the second part of the *Dīwān*), together with a title (taken from the first words of the poem). In the footnotes the names of the odes are specified according to their rhymes (*al-qāfiya*), and the meter (*al-baḥr*) of each ode is indicated. All these designations are added as part of my editing work and are not found in the texts used for this new critical edition.