Islamic Mystical Poetry 3

General Background to the Islamic Mystical Tradition

- **Eric Geoffroy Introduction to Sufism** (Indiana, 21010)
  A good general overview of the ideas and the history of the Sufi tradition. There is maybe just a little bit too much emphasis on its relationship to Islam, but overall Geoffroy has a pretty balanced perspective.

General Reading on Islamic Mystical Poetry

**J T P de Bruijn  Persian Sufi Poetry** (Routledge, 1997)
A basic overview of the classical period of Persian poetry, focussing upon the poems rather than the poets. It has a chapter devoted to each of the four main genres of the tradition: the epigram, the homiletic poem, love poetry and symbolic narrative.

**Arberry, Classical Persian Literature** (London, 1958)
Very good overview from the beginnings of Persian literature and Firdawsi up to Jami in the 15th century. There are chapters on Saʿdi and Rumi and plenty of information on 12-14th century poets and authors.

An excellent study of the main themes in Persian poetry, which developed out of a lecture series she gave at Harvard for more than 20 years. It covers a huge range of times (from Rudaki in 10th century up to 1958) and geographical areas (from the Persian heartlands to Turkey and Muslim India).

**Arberry, Persian Poems. An Anthology of Verse Translations** (Dent 1954)
An old book, but Arberry was a great expert on and wonderful translator of Persian literature, and this is a good selection of poems, many of which he translated himself. It divides into a different set of categories than Bruijn: Quatrain, Lyric, Ode, Didactic, Idyll and Epic.

** Weeks 1 & 2: Ibn al-Fārid**

   The set text for this course. Homerin gives a biography and full translations with notes of *The Wine Ode, The Poem of the Way* and ʿAlī Sibṭ al-Fārid’s early biography.

   Translations of many poems, with note and summaries, including *The Wine Ode*, but not *The Poem of the Way*.

3) **A J Arberry, Poem of the Way**, Chester Beatty Monograph, Dublin, 1952
   Full translation with extensive notes.

This seminal work devotes more than 100 pages to Ibn al-Fārid, giving a summary of the underlying metaphysics, a full translation of The Wine Ode and about three-quarters of The Poem of the Way. Nicholson’s translations, as with his rendering of Rūmī’s Mathnawī and Ibn ‘Arabi’s Tarjumān, have aged very well and if you want to look at a second version, I would recommend this rather than Arberry.


A full critical edition of all Ibn al-Fārid’s poetry in Arabic, very carefully done.


An excellent study of the life and work of Ibn al-Fārid which is at the same time a study of sanctity within the Islamic tradition. There are several other recent works by Homerin on Ibn al-Fārid which I have not had a chance to look at but you will find them listed on Amazon.

Papers


Giuseppe Scattolin *The Key Concepts of al-Farghani’s Commentary on Ibn al-Fāid’s Sufi Poem, al-Tā’īyyat al-Kubrā*

This is actually mostly concerned with the introduction of al-Farhānī’s commentary, which is a metaphysical summary of Ibn ʿArabī’s ideas, with just a small section on *The Poem of the Way* at the end.