

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 Sa'di and Rumi and plenty of information on 12-14th century poets and authors.

Annemarie Schimmel, *A Two-coloured Brocade: the Imagery of Persian poetry* (Chapel Hill, 1992).

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.

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Weeks 1 & 2: Ibn al-Fāriḍ

1) **Th. Emil Homerin** *ʿUmar Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, Paulist Press, NY, 2001.

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 'Alī Sibṭ al-Fāriḍ's early biography.

2) **A J Arberry** *Mystical Poems*, Chester Beatty Monograph, Dublin 1956

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.

4) **R H Nicholson**, *Studies in Islamic Mysticism*, Curzon, London, 1921/1994

This seminal work devotes more than 100 pages to Ibn al-Fāriḍ, 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 'Arabī's *Tarjumān*, have aged very well and if you want to look at a second version, I would recommend this rather than Arberry.

5) Guiseppe Scattolin *The Diwan of Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, Institute Français d'Archeologie Orientale, Cairo, 2004.

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

6) Th, Emil Homerin, *From Arab Poet to Muslim Saint: Ibn Al-Farid, His Verse and His Shrine*, The American University of Cairo, Cairo, 2001.

An excellent study of the life and work of Ibn al-Fāriḍ 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-Fāriḍ which I have not had a chance to look at but you will find them listed on Amazon.

Papers

<http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/articlespdf/alfarghani.pdf>

Giuseppe Scattolin *The Key Concepts of al-Farhānī's Commentary on Ibn al-Fāiḍ'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 'Arabī's ideas, with just a small section on *The Poem of the Way* at the end.