NOTES ET DOCUMENTS
SOME RECENT EDITIONS OF BOOKS BY IBN AL-'ARABÌ
PUBLISHED IN THE ARAB WORLD

BY

GERALD ELMORE

I. K. Manzil al-Manâzîl al-Fahwànîyà

Over the preceding decade of the 1990s several generally serviceable editions of books by the great Sûfî master, Muhyî l-Dîn Ibn al-'Arabî (d. 638/1240), have been published in the Arab world, especially in Cairo and Beirut. Whereas text criticism in Arab scholarship continues to suffer from an utter disinclination to collate—to rigorously compare variant readings and produce new, annotated texts superior to the sum of their material sources—notwithstanding, the still considerable wealth of those material resources in the Arab world (especially in Egypt) not infrequently compensates for the lack of formal treatment. An example of this would be the appearance in Cairo in 1995 of a very good edition of a then-nearly unnoticed major work of Ibn al-'Arabî, the K. Manzil al-manâzîl al-fahwànîyà,1 edited by Sa'id 'Abd al-Fattâh.2 The book was reportedly written in 603/1206-073 and, therefore, evidently in either Hebron or Cairo. As I observed in a review published some years ago,4 Dr. 'Abd al-Fattâh’s edition is distinguished from the currently

---

1 See Osman Yahia, Histoire et classification de l'œuvre d'Ibn 'Arabî (Damascus, 1964), pp. 359-60, Répertoire général, no. 412. The Arabic title should be translated something like: “The Station of Stations, [which is] the Fahwànîyà” (on the latter neologism, see below, at nn. 24 sq.). The book was briefly discussed by Michel Chodkiewicz in An Ocean Without Shore (cited at n. 11, below), where its importance and the rationale of its structure were duly noted.

2 Cairo: Dâr al-Nahâr, 1995. The Manzil al-manâzîl al-fahwànîyà is on pp. 69-117. 'Abd al-Fattâh was a student of Dr. Ĥâmid Ṭâhir Ḥasanayn, who edited the prologue of Ibn al-'Arabî’s K. Mašûthî al-asâr al-qudîyà under the title of “Sainthood and Prophecy” in 1985 (see Alîf, 5, pp. 7-38 [Arabic text]).

3 According to a note in MS Bayezid 3750 reported by Yahia (see Histoire et classification, p. 359).

prevailing Arab practice in that it was based on the very best manuscript source available, *MS Velyuddin 1759/5* (fols. 80-102b), which was copied in the elegant *Maghribi* hand of Ismâ‘il Ibn Sawdakîn (d. 646/1248), Ibn al-‘Arabi’s long-time disciple and associate, in Aleppo on 2 al-Muharram, 618 (26 February, 1221)—just fifteen years after the work’s original composition. According to a *samâ‘* certification on the last page, Ibn Sawdakîn’s reading of the *Manzil* was heard and approved by the author himself, and part of it was audited, also, by Šams al-Dîn Muḥammad b. al-Amîr Sa’d al-Dîn [b. Baranqûš b. Qamar] al-Mu’azzamî, who would later become Ibn al-‘Arabi’s son-in-law (ṣâhî), along with another personage oftentimes associated with the latter in other *samâ‘*s, Abû Bakr b. Ḥisâl al-Sağârî.

The *Manzil al-mawātîl* is an engaging but, at first sight, particularly forbidding book, peculiarly ‘involved’ in the structure of its bewildering labyrinthine litanies, and almost unreadable in the form encountered in manuscripts. In the present edition this obstacle has been greatly reduced by the carefully coordinated paragraphing of its general format, but the *Manzil* remains a rather challenging piece of work. For that reason we are fortunate to have what amounts to Ibn al-‘Arabi’s later revision of the treatise in Chapter XXII of the *Futūhât al-makâkîyâ*—especially as it may be perused in the third volume of the superior, critical edition of Osman Yahia (Cairo, 1974). Both recensions are based on the underlying framework of


1 For photostats of three pages, see *Manzil al-mawâtîl al-fawâidâ*, pp. 78-80. Abîd al-Fattâḥ worked from a microfilm kept at the Ma‘had al-Maḥtûṭât al-‘Arabîyâ in Cairo. The Muḥyiddîn Ibn ‘Arabî Society Library (Oxford) also has a microfilm of *MS Velyuddin 1759/5*.


3 That is, to certify the text he had copied. Previously, however, Ibn al-‘Arabi had dictated the contents to the copyist, who, then, wrote in the colophon: *samâ‘ ... ‘alâ munâsibih* (I heard/learned from its author).

4 See Claude Addas, *Quest for the Red Sulphur* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 224-25 at n. 40, who cites Ibn al-‘Arabi’s still unedited *K. Natâ‘îq al-ṣâfik* for this datum. As the Natâ‘îq was composed sometime after 631/1234, then Šams al-Dîn Muḥammad was not necessarily Ibn al-‘Arabî’s son-in-law at the time he studied the *Manzil*, however; nor is it likely, since he presumably married the Sayî’s daughter, Zaynab, who probably was born around 603/1208 (see my article, “The Bîlâq Dîwân of Ibn al-‘Arabî,” *JAL*, 29 [1999], pp. 145 and 152), and, so, would only have been about thirteen years old at the time. As Addas notes (see *Quest*, p. 224), Šams al-Dîn Muḥammad is first mentioned in a *samâ‘* issued in Malatya, Anatolia (where Zaynab was probably raised), and thereafter he seems to have followed the Sayî when he moved to Syria (later to be joined by his family). But it may well be probable that Ibn al-‘Arabî was actually following his future son-in-law to Damascus since, from the latter’s name as given in the *Manzil* colophon, it would appear that he was a scion of none less than al-Mâlik al-Mu’azzam ʿĪsâ, a nephew of the great Anti-crusader, Šâlîḥ al-Dîn, and Ayyûbîd ruler of the Syrian capital from 615/1218 to 624/1227 (cf. n. 35, below). Such an auspicious marriage would certainly help to account for Ibn al-‘Arabi’s very secure political situation in Damascus from 620/1223 until his death seventeen years later.