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Some preliminary remarks on Evkaf Musesi 1933, a copy of
Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* by the hand of
Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī

1. *Ibn Arabī, the Fuṣūṣ and al-Qūnawī*

The Shaykh al-akbar (Greatest master) Muḥyī al-dīn Ibn ‘Arabī (d. 1240/638), as he was to be known later, is an Andalusian Sufi master of Arabic language and origins who needs very little presentation.¹ After leaving his native country, in which the *Reconquista*, although far from being fully accomplished, was by then a slow but inexorable process, he travelled through north Africa and visited many cities of the Middle East among which Cairo, Jerusalem, Mecca, Baghdad, Konya and Damascus without settling in any of them but for relatively short periods. During his life long journey he spread knowledge and spiritual light, aroused lively enthusiasm, bitter criticism and open hostility from which he was saved by mighty men of power whose friendship and esteem he gained through the example of his devout life, unequalled insights and a uniquely original doctrinal exposition. His mystical and poetical literary work covered almost all of his life, thus amounting to hundreds of books and treaties very different in size.²

Apart from the *Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, the best-known book he wrote is the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, which is also the most influential and controversial of his works. Divided into 27 chapters, it deals with as many prophets from the biblical and “Arab” traditions and its contents started being the object of polemic attacks from a very early time.³ Maybe due to the far-sighted caution of its author, according to what has been established, this book had mainly a restricted circulation at the beginning of its

¹ Among the articles and books devoted to this subject, one will refer to either the wide spread biography by C. ADDAS, *Ibn ‘Arabī ou La quête du Soufre Rouge*, Paris 1989, which has been translated in a number of languages, or the shorter but effective *Ibn Arabī et le voyage sans retour*, Paris 1996, by the same author.

² A classical standard reference is O. YAHYA, *Histoire et classification de l’œuvre d’Ibn ‘Arabī*, 2 voll., Damascus 1954.

³ M. CHODKIEWICZ, *Le procès posthume d’Ibn ‘Arabī*, in F. DE JONG – B. RADTKE (Eds.), *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, Leiden 1999, in particular pp. 98 ff.

existence, but it quickly won fame after Ibn 'Arabī's death, so that down the centuries it has collected more than a hundred commentaries of different length and in various languages, starting from the very first generation of the master's disciples.⁴ The unsurpassed interest of the contents of the book is also proved by a perhaps even increasing contemporary attention from both the Eastern world and the Western scholars⁵ which has led and is leading to devote to it studies, translations⁶ and either interpretative or critical editions,⁷ some of which are currently on-going.

In addition to the huge amount of the author's own originality, the historical process of development of the Sufi orders (*turuq*) in the immediate subsequent period and the political patronage of many Ottoman rulers, it is well established by now that Ibn 'Arabī's future intellectual fortune is largely due to the work of mediation afforded by his disciple Ṣadr al-dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274/672),⁸ who in his turn was to be known at a certain stage as the Shaykh al-kabīr (Great master).⁹ The son of a very close friend of Ibn 'Arabī, before composing, as an adult, a certain number of books in which he explained the Akbarian doctrines by translating them into more philosophical words, al-Qūnawī had been in his youth a promising disciple who had had the chance to serve many times as the master's secretary.¹⁰ It is precisely during a set of lectures that he found himself busy with a delicate task, that is writing and emending a very important manuscript completely devoted to host the text that Ibn 'Arabī received – as the master himself stated in his preface – by the Prophet in a dream: «This is the Book of the *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* – would have said Muḥammad in the vision –, take it and bring it to people so that they can benefit from it».¹¹ This manuscript was

⁴ Its first commentary was probably that of Ibn Sawdakīn (d. 1248/646), which is not complete and, at least in the form in which we know it, concerns the only fourth chapter of the book.

⁵ Something which, more in general, the whole corpus of Ibn 'Arabī's work has experienced since the end of the 19th century, as first noticed by Chodkiewicz who speaks of an «Akbarian renaissance» (see M. CHODKIEWICZ, *The Diffusion of Ibn 'Arabī's Doctrine*, in «Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society» 9 (1991), p. 57 and n. 51).

⁶ Either in the Western and Eastern languages.

⁷ The earliest standard editions of the text appeared in Cairo in 1252 h. and Istanbul in 1897 (for detailed bibliographical references see A. ATEŞ, s.v. *Ibn 'Arabī*, in *Encyclopaedia of Islam 2* (electronic version)). 'Afīfī's critical edition (M. IBN 'ARABĪ, *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*, A. 'Afīfī (Ed.), [Cairo] Beirut 1946, p. 21) was originally composed in 1946 and has been reprinted many times. It is based on three later manuscripts, the earliest of which dates back to 788 h.

⁸ See J. CLARK, *Early Best-sellers in the Akbarian Tradition*, in «Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society» 33 (2003), pp. 22-23.

⁹ O. BENAÏSSA, *The Diffusion of the Akbarian Teaching in Iran during the 13th and 14th centuries*, in «Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society» 26 (1999), p. 90.

¹⁰ A complete extended biography is still missing, but new discoveries have been achieved about al-Qūnawī's life, the places he visited and the people he was in contact with. For an enlightening and updated account of his life, see J. CLARK, *Towards a Biography of Ṣadr al-dīn al-Qūnawī*, in «Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society» 49 (2011), pp. 1-34.

¹¹ This well-known passage from the introduction has been translated many times, and is found on f. 1v of the manuscript under scrutiny.

to be recorded in more recent days as Evkaf Musesi 1933,¹² and is the object of this preliminary examination.

2. The certificates and annotations on the manuscript

Beside the quality of the quite readable handwriting, Evkaf Musesi 1933 displays more of its value when attentively reading the general annotations (*ta'liqāt*), the audition certificates (*samā'āt*) and the marginal notes (*balāghāt*) irregularly seen on its leaves.

The general annotations and the audition certificates are to be found in both f. 1r and f. 78r. As for the first leaf, f. 1r, which in the existing binding follows an odd folio of a different colour bearing no page number, it is the title page. It contains many annotations that are clearly in a different handwriting from one another. The lower part of the leaf is entirely covered with one long annotation. It is a commentary on the virtues of the *Fātiḥat al-kitāb* (the first chapter of the Koran), in the light of some basic teachings of Ibn 'Arabī himself. Seen the topic dealt with, it was probably meant to be a kind of ultimately brief compendium of the Shaykh's doctrines, but it has little value from the actual point of view of this communication. The same goes for two other annotations which appear on the upper part of the same leaf, the first one of which is on the top left margin, whereas the second one runs about the title, from the middle left margin to the top of the page, and then down to the middle right margin again.

Much more interesting from our point of view are four marginalia also appearing on the upper half of this page. The first one is but the full title of the book, which is usually known in the abridged version (*Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*). Here the title is fully vocalised and written on two lines in a bigger and more extended script: «*kitāb fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam wa khuṣūṣ al-kalim*» (lit. meaning: «The Book of the Bezels of the Wisdoms and the Peculiarity of the Words»).

Immediately below the title, a paragraph clearly states the authorship of the book. It reads: «*inshā' sayyidi-nā wa-shaykhi-nā al-imām al-'ālim al-rāsikh al-fard al-muḥaqqiq muḥyī al-millat wa'l-dīn abū 'abd allāh muḥammad bin 'alī bin al-'arabī al-ṭā'ī al-ḥātimī al-andalusī raḍīya allāh 'an-hu wa-arḍā-hu*» (meaning: «The composition of our patron and master, the leader, the knower, the profoundly established in knowledge, the singular, the one who attained the Truth, the one who revivifies the community and the tradition,¹³ Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad bin 'Alī bin

¹² Full bibliographical details are given at the end of this article.

¹³ The title of "revitalizer of the tradition" was to become standard at a very early stage, but, as we see here, this is not the only form attested in the manuscripts when the author was still in life.

al-'Arabī al-Ṭā'ī al-Ḥātīmī al-Andalusī, may God be pleased with him and make him satisfied».¹⁴

Underneath, one can read two more statements, perhaps the most important of the whole page.¹⁵ The first one testifies the name of the transmitter of the text, i.e. the one who actually wrote those pages: «*riwāyat ṣadr al-dīn muḥammad bin isḥāq bin muḥammad al-qūnawī 'an-nī*»¹⁶ (meaning: «Transmission of Ṣadr al-dīn Muḥammad bin Isḥāq bin Muḥammad al-Qūnawī according to my [the Master's] authority»).

The next two lines are both in the same handwriting, and have clearly been attested as being written by Ibn 'Arabī himself by M. Chodkiewicz.¹⁷ They read as follows:

«*Qara'a 'alayya hādhā al-kitāb min awwali-hi ilā ākhiri-hi al-walad al-'ārif al-muḥaqqiq al-mashrūḥ al-ṣadr al-munawwar al-dhāt muḥammad bin isḥāq bin muḥammad al-qūnawī mālik hādhā al-kitāb, wa-adhina la-hu fī'l-ḥadīth bi-hi 'an-nī, wa-kataba munshi'u-hu muḥammad ibn al-'arabī fī ghurra jumādā al-ākhira sanat thalāthin wa-sittimi'at*»

(meaning: «This book was read¹⁸ to me from its beginning to its end by the son, the gnostic, the one who attained the Truth, whose chest is wide open [to the divine ray], whose essence is enlightened, Muḥammad bin Isḥāq bin Muḥammad al-Qūnawī, [he is] the possessor of this book and he heard it from my exposition. Its author Muḥammad ibn al-'Arabī wrote [this] on the 1st of *Jumādā II* of year 630»).

As it appears, these reports give no account of the possibility that, when read back to the author, the book was recited in front of an audience larger than the master himself, as also was used at that time. This is the reason why for a certain time this manuscript was thought to be the object of individual classes or reading.¹⁹ It is only perusing the last page of the text (f. 78r) that one can discover that the manuscript on the contrary was read in front of a small circle of followers. Indeed, the names of seven more people (beside the author and the scribe) are recorded in a long *samā'* certificate, immediately below the colophon. Both these notes are interesting.

As for the colophon, it asserts that the comments on the text, which are written on the margins (we will go back to them later on) were annotated by Muḥammad bin Isḥāq, i.e. the scribe, in his hand: «*tamma al-kitāb wa'l-ḥamd li'l-lāh 'alā kull ḥāl, 'allaqa-hu muḥammad bin isḥāq bi-khaṭṭi-hi*» (meaning: «The book is completed,

¹⁴ Hirtenstein (S. HIRTENSTEIN, *Manuscripts of Ibn 'Arabī's works*, in «Journal of the Muhyidin Ibn 'Arabi Society» 41 (2007), pp. 109-129) has given a list of Ibn 'Arabī's titles which appeared in the earliest manuscripts.

¹⁵ The statements are also encircled with an irregular line.

¹⁶ The original Arabic is, here and later on, in a defective form, and where necessary has been corrected according to modern orthography.

¹⁷ M. GHURĀB, *Sharḥ Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam (Notes et commentaires)*, in «Studia Islamica» 76 (1992), p. 180 (Chodkiewicz's reply).

¹⁸ In the Arabic text the verb is in the active form.

¹⁹ J. CLARK, *Early Best-sellers...*, cit., pp. 33-34, n. 34.

and praise be to God in any condition. Muḥammad bin Ishāq annotated it in his own handwriting»).

The last portion of text of the page, apart from the marginal notes, is the 8-line long record of reading (*samā'* certificate). Due to a sudden change in the accuracy of the handwriting, this paragraph is probably the most challenging one of the whole manuscript. Recognition of its meaning is anyway essential to know more about the codex. It was M. Chodkiewicz who first discovered some details contained in it when he succeeded in grasping its overall contents. The text is not immediately clear in all its parts, and needs an exhaustively attentive examination, but the core points are the following:

- a list of witnesses (lines 1-7),
- the set where the reading took place (lines 7-8),
- the date when the whole process was completed (line 8).

The list of the witnesses who attended all the sessions of reading (*sami'a jamī' hādhā al-kitāb*) is the following:²⁰

- 1) Zayn al-dīn Yūsuf bin Ibrāhīm al-Shāfi'ī²¹
- 2) 'Alā' al-dīn Muḥammad bin Sharaf al-dīn 'Abd al-Qādir bin 'Abd al-Khāliq bin Khalīl al-Imādī
- 3) 'Imād al-dīn Muḥammad, son of the Shaykh
- 4) Muwaffaq al-dīn Abū'l-Qāsim Aḥmad bin 'Alī Ibrāhīm al-Ishbīlī al-Qaysī
- 5) Sayf al-dīn 'Alī bin 'Abd al-Nūr al-Ḥumayrī
- 6) Taqī al-dīn Abū Muḥammad bin 'Abd al-Raḥmān bin Muḥammad bin 'Alī al-Lūlī, a companion of the Shaykh
- 7) Tāj al-dīn 'Abbās bin 'Umar al-Rābi' al-Anṣārī
- 8) the scribe himself, Muḥammad bin Ishāq bin Muḥammad bin Yūsuf bin 'Alī.

It should also be pointed out that the last two names are connected to some more information: the former is said to be the reader (*wa-dhālika bi-qirā'at tāj al-dīn*), while the latter was at the same time a listener and a reader in his turn. As for the asserted context and time in which the auditions (*samā'*) occurred, they were the Shaykh's lectures (*majālis*) at the time when he was in Damascus, being maintained that the set of the reading sessions was completed within the month of *Jumādā I* of year 630.

What has been said so far is probably enough to have an idea of the situation in which this manuscript was produced. Nevertheless, some additional information can be achieved by perusing the notes written on the margins of a certain number of pages. The notes worth of interest are at least six, two of them being collected on the

²⁰ Given the great irregularity of the handwriting this list, which tries to complete the one supplied by the MIAS, is to be considered a working hypothesis.

²¹ He was the addressee of the *Kitāb nasab al-khirqā* according to one of the manuscripts (Yahya Efendi 2415) (C. ADDAS, *Ibn 'Arabī ou La quête du Soufre Rouge*, cit., p. 179, n. 1).

same last page of the corpus of the text (f. 78r) and four more being scattered in different folia.²² The notes are quite alike each other, conveying more or less the same meaning, but what they differ in from one another is mainly the expressions there used. Being collation notes (*balāghāt*), these records inform the reader of the point in which the public reading or collation was interrupted, but also provide information on the methods applied to check and emend the text.²³ In this case, the process of revision was double. The first way was reading the text in front of the master, to have the manuscript lesson corrected by him. This method, which seen the *samā'* certificate on f. 1r is no news, is attested in the two notes of f. 78r. Here, beside confirming the date already given, the reviser (or possibly the revisers, as the notes seem to be in two different inks and handwritings)²⁴ used expressions such as: «*balagha samā'an wa-taṣḥīḥan 'alā al-shaykh*» or «*balagha 'arḍan wa-qirā'atan [...] bayna yaday sayyidi-nā al-muṣannif li-hādhā al-kitāb*» (respectively meaning that «[the process of revision] reached [the end of the text] by way of audition and correction under the guidance of the master» and «by way of presentation through public recitation and reading [...] in front of our master, the author of this book»).²⁵

The second way used for assessing the exactness of the text was more basically its emendation on the basis of a previous written copy of the same book. This way might seem to be less intriguing than the previous one, given that it is the most common attested in the history of emendation of Arabic, but also Western, manuscripts. On the contrary, it is very interesting in our case, as it conceals an undeniable underlying fact which is the existence of a manuscript which had been composed before this one and was written in Ibn 'Arabī's hand.²⁶ The notes of this second group appear coherent in their meaning, even if the text is not always completely legible. They say as follows:

f. 10v: [...] «muqābalat ma'a al-aṣl alladhī bi-khaṭṭi-hi, [...] bi-qirā'at muḥammad bin ishāq 'alā al-munshi' li-hādhā al-kitāb raḍiya allāh 'an-hu, wa-sami'a bi'l-qirā'at al-madhkūrat [...] al-kitāb ilā hunā al-shaykh [...] 'alā al-shaykh raḍiya allāh 'an-hu»

(meaning: «[...] the collation with the original which is in his handwriting, [...] by way of reading on the part of Muḥammad bin Ishāq to the composer of this book, may God be pleased with him. The Shaykh [...] has listened to the aforementioned reading

²² The one on f. 77v is hardly readable, due to the fact that the paper is cut. Therefore it seems of little use at the moment.

²³ See A. GACEK, *Arabic Manuscripts. A Vademecum for Readers*, Leiden 2009, pp. 65-69 (s.v. *Collation notes and marks*).

²⁴ A more thorough inspection is required on this point.

²⁵ A. GACEK (*Arabic Manuscripts...*, cit., p. 67) gives a list of technical expressions used in these circumstances and their English translation.

²⁶ This piece of information is interesting especially because the copy referred to is not existent anymore.

[...] of the book up to this point under the guidance of the Shaykh, may God be pleased with him»).

The understanding of this fragmentary report is supported by the subsequent notes:

f. 25r: «balagha samā'an li'l-shaykh abī ishāq bi-qirā'at muḥammad bin ishāq 'alā shaykhi-nā al-munshi' li-hādhā al-kitāb raḍiya allāh 'an-hu, wa-balaghat al-muqābalat bi-aṣl al-shaykh alladhī bi-khaṭṭi-hi bayna yaday-hi raḍiya allāh 'an-hu»

(meaning: «[the revision] has reached [this point] by way of the listening of Shaykh Abū Ishāq to the reading on the part of Muḥammad bin Ishāq under the guidance of our Shaykh, the composer of this book, may God be pleased with him. And [also] the emendation with the Shaykh's original which is in his handwriting has attained [this point] in his presence, may God be pleased with him»).

f. 35v: «balagha taṣḥīḥan ma'a aṣl al-shaykh wa-samā'an [...] abī ishāq bi-qirā'at muḥammad bin ishāq 'alā shaykhi-hi al-munshi' raḍiya allāh 'an-hu»

(meaning: «[the revision] has reached [this point] by way of emendation with the Shaykh's original and by way of the listening [...] Abū Ishāq to the reading on the part of Muḥammad bin Ishāq under the guidance of his Shaykh, the composer, may God be pleased with him»).

Beside the complexity of interpretation due to the gaps, these notes raise the problem of the correct attribution of the name of the thus far mysterious figure of Abū Ishāq, which is referred to twice. Is that another name for Ibn 'Arabī, or does it refer to someone else? As for the first hypothesis, it is unlikely, especially because none of the manuscripts or chronicles known to us seem to testify this *kunya*. On the other hand, one should say that the name Abū Ishāq occurs at least once in one of al-Qūnawī's well-known books, *al-Nafahāt al-Ilāhiyya*.²⁷ In this text, in which al-Qūnawī makes reference to and elaborates some of the mystical experiences he went through in a period of over thirty years, the author collects the letters he addressed to friends and prominent personalities of his time. It is specifically one of the addressees here mentioned who happens to have the name Abū Ishāq. Not many details are given about him, but from the titles which precede his name, it is apparent that he must have been an eminent figure of the time, and a dear companion of the master.²⁸ Anyway, also this second hypothesis needs to be discussed because it immediately leaps to one's eyes that this name is not mentioned in the list given in the final *samā'* (f. 78r), where the completion of the whole process of reading/audition (*qirā'at/samā'*), emendation (*taṣḥīḥ*) and annotation (*ta'līq*) is finally recorded. Might it have happened that a supposed outstanding figure such as that of Abū Ishāq

²⁷ The place and date of publication are Beirut 2007.

²⁸ So despite the fact that the letter is almost at the end of the book and has the general title «Another writing to one of the brothers».

was forgotten or passed over in silence in the final statement? The answer may lie in the expression there used, i.e. «... listened to the [reading of] this *whole* book», thus implying only a limited attendance of the illustrious guest to the gatherings.

There is one more thing one should draw their own attention to, when studying these annotations, that is the distance at which they appear from one another. Indeed, their distribution is quite irregular, the first one being on f. 10v, the second one on f. 25r, the third one on f. 35v and the last ones on f. 78r, as we have seen. If the scribe has not neglected to note them down in one or more occasions, that would mean that the whole text was read in only four sessions, the last of which extending for over 42 leaves (more than a half of the entire book). This hypothesis, however theoretically not impossible, seems extreme. It might be explained only on the basis of sudden hurry, which in its turn might be possibly justified by Ibn 'Arabī and his disciples' geographical instability. This may also explain two other things: one is the sudden change in the quality and legibility of the handwriting of the last audition certificate, and the other is the disappearance of the second way of emendation, i.e. the confrontation against the Shaykh's original manuscript, the mention of which, one will have noticed that, do not occur in the two notes of the last folio. On the other hand, it might be possible that in the second half of the codex the scribe omitted to note down the listening reports, but in this case one should need to try to explain why. So the question might be: did this change in attitude simply correspond to a change in the person who undertook the task for the second part of the text, before leaving the incumbency to al-Qūnawī again in the very end?

3. Dating the text

What is clear is that perusing the annotations of *Evkaf Musesi 1933* allows and is enough to establish the period when the manuscript itself was read and emended. But does it tell us anything about the composition of the work, i.e. the *Fuṣūṣ* as such, in its original copy, its history and the timing of its at least initial dissemination? Surely, it helps establish some milestones and from it we get some interesting pieces of information: 1) at least two manuscripts were written while Ibn 'Arabī was in life²⁹; 2) one of those manuscripts was in the Shaykh al-akbar's handwriting whereas the other was in his secretary's; 3) the one written by Ibn 'Arabī had been written before the process of emendation of *Evkaf Musesi 1933* started; 4) i.e. the original manuscript had been written before the month of *Jumādā I* of year 630.

So, recapitulating, we have two reference dates, which are respectively the *terminus post quem* and *terminus ante quem* for the redaction of the original copy. These dates are found either in the text of the book or in the apparatus supplied by the manuscript:

²⁹ O. YAHYA (*Histoire et classification...*, cit., I, p. 241) lists another manuscript which he states was written in Ibn 'Arabī's lifetime, but it seems to be a later copy rather than an original.

DATE	FACT	CONTEXT	PLACE	SOURCE
End of <i>Muḥarram</i> (the first month) of year 627	Input for writing the <i>Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam</i> according to what was inspired in the dream	Vision of the Prophet in Ibn ‘Arabī’s dream	Damascus	EM 1933, f. 1v (<i>muqaddima</i>)
<i>Jumādā I</i> (the fifth month) of 630	Writing, reading and emendation of Qunawī’s manuscript	Shaykh’s lectures in front of a restricted circle of disciples	Damascus	EM 1933, f. 1r (short <i>samā’</i> certificate), and f. 78r (long <i>samā’</i> certificate and first marginal collation note)

However, beside that, from the information available in the manuscript, it is impossible to state when the original text was first composed, the night of the vision of the Prophet being but the initial input which may or may not be immediately followed by the execution of the order. Therefore, the exact time of the first writing remains unknown in absence of the original copy or any external witnesses. As it was pointed out, one decisive, possibly ultimate indication may be found in the *Fihriṣ* which Ibn ‘Arabī addressed to al-Qūnawī in the same year of 627. The edition of this text, listing the works the Shaykh al-akbar had written up to that moment, is awaited in a reliable critical editions on the basis of its original³⁰ since decades, other earlier editions³¹ being carried out on later copies giving lists which are not coherent with one another.

In conclusion, the analysis of the marginal notes and other annotations is useful to collect much information on the circumstances in which the manuscript was written and to throw some lights on or to confirm details of Ibn’ Arabī’s life, teaching or stays in the period when the manuscript was composed. Some other circumstances are to be better cleared up according with external references. We have left them in the shape of alternative hypotheses, whose resolution, transcending the aim of this brief communication, will hopefully be achieved through more in-depth research.

³⁰ Yusuf Aga 5624, pp. 378-388.

³¹ Namely those of K. ‘AWWĀD (1954-55) and A. ‘AFĪFĪ (1955) (for full references see O. YA-HYA, *Histoire et classification...*, cit., I, p. 238).

4. A synthetic description of the manuscript *Evkaf Musesi 1933*³²

At the end of these notes, we are now able to give a more precise description of the manuscript, according to the criteria outlined by Adam Gacek³³.

Transmission

- According to what stated in the audition certificate (f. 1r) and other annotations (f. 78r) the text was written by Ṣadr al-dīn al-Qūnawī and read before the author, Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad Ibn al-'Arabī. The text was signed by the author, as proved by the *samā'* certificate of f. 1r, which is recognized (Chodkiewicz) as being written in the author's hand.
- A part from the aforementioned certificate, the text is not a holograph. In fact, besides being read in front of and orally emended by the author, according to some marginal annotations (ff. 10v, 25r and 35v), the text was collected with the original manuscript (*aṣl*) which was in the author's handwriting. Therefore, as far as it is known, despite not being the original exemplar, this manuscript is the *vetustissimus* (the most ancient copy actually available).

Preliminary Data

- Ms. number: *Evkaf Musesi 1933*, in Türk-Islam Eserleri Müzesi (Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art), Istanbul.
- Catalogues: Osman Yahya, *Histoire et classification de l'œuvre d'Ibn 'Arabī*, Damas 1964, p. 240, vol. I.
- Language: Arabic; Subject: Mysticism.

Composition (Text)

- Title: *Kitāb Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam wa-Khuṣūṣ al-Kalim* (f. 1r)
- Place of composition: Damascus (f. 78r, *samā'*);
- Date of composition: *Jumādā I* 630 h. (ff. 1r and 78r, *samā'*, first marginal collation note)
- Author: {Muḥyī al-millat wa'l-dīn} Abū 'Abd Allāh Muḥammad ibn 'Alī ibn al-'Arabī al-Ṭā'ī al-Ḥātimī al-Andalusī (f. 1r; *passim*)

³² The present description is based on the excellent scanned copy of the original manuscript that was kindly provided by the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society and accompanied by a concise informative sheet. Despite being absolutely clear, as an electronic version, it is nevertheless not sufficient to supply all the information here expected, which can be revealed only by the original paper version. As a consequence, this description will be completed where necessary as soon as one will be able to refer to the original, which has not been possible to consult thus far.

³³ A. GACEK, *Arabic Manuscripts...*, cit., pp. 333-337.

Writing Surfaces/Supports

- Paper, three different colours: coral red (quires 1st-6th) and sandy brown (quires 7th-10th) for the text, white for external folia (beginning and end papers)

Textblock

- Dimension of the page: information not available at the moment
- Written area: 21 lines per page
- Page layout: one single column per page
- No apparent rulings or pricking around the text
- Foliation/Pagination: order in the book: 1 / 1 ; folios i+1a-78a(+53bis)+ii ; numeration system: Hindu-Arabic numbers, written at a later date, probably by a cataloguer, in the left-hand upper corner of the page
 - Quires and Quire signatures: i+1⁸⁺2⁸⁺3⁸⁺4⁸⁺5⁸⁺6⁸⁺7⁸⁺8⁶⁺9⁸⁺10¹⁰⁺i+i, the quire number is written on the top left margin of the first folio of each quire, apart from the first one, in the following shape: «*al-rābi'a min fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*»
 - Catchwords: one or rarely two words written horizontally on their own on each folio, below the last line; not enclosed in surroundings. Ff. 9,18,26,28,32,36,45 have no catchwords; on ff. 13,19,31,53a(=bis),67 the writing is slightly sloping. The catchwords line is darker and more irregular and uncertain than that of the text.

Scripts/Hands

- Number of hands: the principal body of text involves always the same one hand; some of the emendations seem to involve different hands than the text and are in different colours. The colophon is written in a different script, sensibly less accurate, and with almost no letter-pointing.
 - Type of script: a Persian-style script, quite clear, serifless. The title and chapter headings are written in bold characters and using a larger script.
 - Letter-pointing: presence of diacritical points (rounded dots), although partial;
 - Vocalisation: the text is not vocalized (very few exceptions); the chapter headings are vocalized; the vocalisation is in the same colour as the text. *Shadda* appears rarely; *alif* of prolongation, *waṣla* and *ḥamza* are omitted.

Ink

- The text is monochrome in black ink.
- The emendations are in three different colours, and partially in different hands. There are three groups: 1) same colour and hand as the text; 2) darker black colour in a thinner line, and a more irregular and uncertain hand

than the text; 3) red ink, thinner line and apparently different hand than the text (this last group occurs mainly but not only in the second part of the codex).

- Seen the two final marginal annotations (f. 78r), the emendations of at least group 1 and 2 should be considered as a coherent apparatus dictated by the author himself.

Painted Decoration and Illustration

- There are no decorated pieces, either in the text or in the marginal notes, no illustrations, no decorated borders or artistic use of coloured inks.

Bookbinding:

- The bookbinding is not the original one (if any). It is of the same size as the textblock.

Transmission of the Text

- Several notes and annotations on the title page and last pages attest that this copy was highly evaluated, and much studied and copied throughout the centuries. Despite not being holograph, the text is almost unanimously accounted as the *optimus* by the tradition.

State of Preservation:

- The state of preservation of the manuscript is good. The text is easily readable, but for some notes and annotations. When not readable, the latter are affected by the cut or consumption of the paper in the edges of the folia (possibly the clearest example is given by the margins of f. 1r). There are evidences of recent restoration, especially in the initial sheets. Most of the folia show damages due to moths and humidity, but these do not affect the quality and legibility of the text.