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Qurrat al-^ʿAyn, the Maiden of the Ka^ʿba: On the *Themenophany* Inspiring Ibn ^ʿArabī's *Tarjumān*

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Abstract: Qurrat al-^ʿAyn is the name of the enigmatic Maiden who appeared alongside Ibn ^ʿArabī when he was inspired to recite the four verses that open *The Interpreter of Desires*, as he was wandering around the Ka^ʿba. In this article, through the analysis of the passage in which she is mentioned, the identity of the Maiden is explored from various perspectives typical of the author's theo-anthropocosmivision, characterised by his concept of theophany (*tajallī*) or divine self-revelation, resorting especially to both the analysis of the lexical inter-reference in the roots of the Arabic terms used by Ibn ^ʿArabī in his *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, as well as the study of the symbolism characteristic of the Arabic alphanumeric system. Furthermore, the article proposes that the kaleidoscopic structure of this collection of odes, studied here for the first time, is the result of a *themenophany* of the Ka^ʿba: the *Tarjumān* has been “inspired” by/on the Ka^ʿba itself, so that in a sense it is a *bibliophany* of the so-called House of God, to whose geometry—four corners, six faces, seven ritual turns, eight vertices—its structural conception corresponds. The symbolism of Arabic geomancy in relation to the structure of the *Tarjumān* is also considered.

Keywords: Ibn ^ʿArabī; theophany; Qurrat al-^ʿAyn; *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*; *Interpreter of Desires*; science of letters; *abjad*; Sufism; Arabic geomancy



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1. Introduction

The work of the Andalusian Muḥyī l-Dīn Ibn ^ʿArabī (Murcia 1165–Damascus 1240 CE), widely recognized as the greatest exponent of the sciences of Sufism and Islamic esotericism, can be considered the culminating expression of thought in al-Andalus and, without comparison with any other in the literary scope, the most significant contribution of the Andalusian cultural environment to the legacy of the Arab language and the universal Islamic culture. His most famous, translated, and commented collection of odes, the *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, part of his enormous poetic production, of particularly lyrical inspiration, reveals that Ibn ^ʿArabī is also among the greatest poets in the history of literature, especially in the field of mystical poetry. Among other aspects, the rich plurality of expressive registers in his writing, in inspired interaction, also makes his poetry the culminating expression of its genre in the Arabic language.

In this brief study¹, which analyses various technical aspects of the preface to *The Interpreter of Desires*—in particular the only episode in which the personal figure of Qurrat al-^ʿAyn is mentioned as such in the writings of Ibn ^ʿArabī—I am obliged to assume a certain familiarity of the reader with Ibn ^ʿArabī's thought, as well as with his hermeneutical procedures, which include both (1) the use of the alphanumeric calculation system² as

¹ This article is based on the text presented at the MIAS Symposium *Counsel my people*, celebrated at the Wolfson College, Oxford, October 2019.

² Known in Arabic, among other denominations, as *ḥisāb al-jummal*, the language of arithmosophy is very significantly used and transmitted by the author, a master par excellence in this contemplative art, in many of his writings, especially in Chapter II of *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*. See Winkel's translation (Ibn ^ʿArabī 2018c, pp. 161–286). On the science of letters see the general studies by Pierre Lory (2004) and Denis Gril (2004). On the use of the *ḥisāb al-jummal*, see for example, *Patterns of contemplation* (Beneito and Hirtenstein 2021) and, among the many works by ʿAbd al-Bāqī Miṭṭāḥ, his *Mafātīḥ fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Miṭṭāḥ 1997, p. 62). As a tool for counting, including a table of letter values, see also the *Abjad Calculator* (<https://www.abjadcalc.com>, accessed on 10 January 2021) which follows Ibn ^ʿArabī's main *abjad* rules (although it never considers *shadda*, 'reduplication', and always counts *tā' marbūṭa* as a *hā'*).

a symbolic reference frame that refers to a structural geometry in the background of the texts, and (2) the use of associations characteristic of lexical inter-reference (*ishtiqāq* or morphosemantic derivation), so significant when it comes to understanding the framework of his writings (Beneito 2006, p. 25 ff.) as well as (3) the constant practice of intertextuality, principally with the written references of the Koran and the Hadith and with his own work, although also, of course, with the works of other Sufis or Arab authors.

1.1. The Passage from Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Tarjumān* on *Qurrat al-‘Ayn*

I will comment in particular on the passage, relating to the female figure of *Qurrat al-‘Ayn*, that appears both in the original short preface of the *Tarjumān*³, where there is not a single mention of the young maiden al-Nizām—who is generally considered to be the inspiration for this collection—and in the longer preface to the extensive commentary on the work, the *Dhakhā’ir al-a-lāq* (Ibn ‘Arabī 1995, pp. 179–81), which includes the whole of the original text of the *Tarjumān*. To introduce the context, I include first, with minimum comments, a new translation of the brief passage whose parts I will study later in detail. In that passage, Ibn ‘Arabī says,

And part of it [i.e., of the composition of the collection] is a conversation in the course of an episode that happened during the circumambulation [of the Ka’ba]. I was circumambulating one night around the House [of God], when my [spiritual] moment (*waqt*) became propitious and shook me up a state I already knew. I then left the paved space to [get away from] people and continued to walk around on the sand. Then some verses presented themselves to me and I began to recite them, making them audible to myself and to whoever might have been with me, if anyone could have been there. And [the verses] are:

Would that I were aware whether they knew what heart they possessed!

And would that my heart knew what mountain-pass they threaded!

Dost thou deem them safe or dost thou deem them dead?

Lovers lose their way in love and become entangled”⁴.

[After quoting the enigmatic verses, the passage continues]

I felt nothing but the touch, between my shoulders, of the palm of a hand softer than silk. When I turned around, [I found that] there was a maiden from among the daughters of Rūm⁵. I have never seen a more beautiful face, nor [heard] sweeter language, nor more penetrating glosses, nor more subtle meanings, nor allusions so delicate, nor conversations so graceful. She is ahead of [all] the people of her time in grace, courtesy, beauty and knowledge. Then she said: ‘My Lord, how hast thou said [when declaiming . . .]?’ And I answered [repeating the first verse] . . . ”

[Then follows the young Maiden’s commentary and questioning, verse by verse. At the end, Ibn ‘Arabī ends the story of the encounter in these terms]:

I then asked her: ‘Cousin, what is your name?’ and she said: ‘*Qurrat al-‘Ayn* [Pleasure of the Eye]’. To which I replied: ‘[The pleasure is] mine’. (Ibn ‘Arabī [1955] 2003, pp. 11–12)

This concludes the account of the meeting with *Qurrat al-‘Ayn*, whose personal name, as has been said, is not mentioned by such a personal name, to my knowledge, in any other

³ I differ from Nicholson’s thesis (Ibn ‘Arabī 1911a, pp. 3–6), who considered this second, more extensive preface, in which Nizām appears explicitly mentioned, as the original one. I consider, on the contrary, that the analysis of the manuscript copies (in particular ms. Ragib Pasha 1453/181b–202b and ms. Manisa 6596/81b–90a) shows that the short version—without mentioning Nizām, the poet’s beloved friend—is the original preface of the collection, conceived of as a ‘section’ (*juz*) of a wider inclusive *dīwān* before it became, after the addition of the author’s own commentary, a complete independent book by itself. On more details and references of these textual issues, see (Beneito 2022, *sub voce*).

⁴ I quote here the translation by Nicholson (Ibn ‘Arabī 1911a, p. 48), from whose editing and interpretation I only slightly differ in a couple of secondary terms. My Spanish version in *El compás de la inspiración* (Beneito 2022) will be accompanied by an in-depth study of the poem.

⁵ On the meaning of this expression, see below Section 2.4.

passage of the author's works. This is followed by Ibn 'Arabī's own commentary on the four verses (so that these are repeated three times in their entirety in the final text, perhaps in correspondence with the three axes or dimensions of the Temple's cube and the human cubic/spherical constitution⁶ as conceived by Ibn 'Arabī). It is understood that the author is thus responding to the questions raised by Qurrat al-'Ayn, whose objections and demands—which provide a teaching proper to an inspired master of interpretation—would be from this perspective the true spiritual motif of the composition of Ibn 'Arabī's subsequent commentary, above the secondary request of his companions because of the objections raised by a certain contemporary *faqīh* teaching in Aleppo⁷. Qurrat al-'Ayn questions the verses which, according to my understanding, she herself has actually inspired, thus requiring Ibn 'Arabī's subsequent commentary which she herself also inspires.

1.2. The Dating of the *Tarjumān* in Relation to Its Structure

One aspect of Ibn 'Arabī's hermeneutic features—commonly neglected—is the symbolic significance—perceived as providential—of dates relating to the composition of his writings. From this perspective, we note that the year in which Ibn 'Arabī arrives in Mecca, as explained by the author at the very beginning of the original preface, is 598 H., a figure which by reduction to units, according to the so-called minor calculation system ($598 = 5 + 9 + 8 = 22 = 2 + 2$)—is equivalent to 4, corresponding to the four verses, the four corners of the Ka'ba, and the numerical value of the first letter of the title of the work, the *tā'* of *tarjumān*, because these four verses constitute, in a way, the interpretative key of the 598 verses of the book. So, 598 is in correspondence with the same year 598 of the author's arrival in Mecca, a correlation that has not been observed before but is fundamental to understanding the structure of the collection.

On the other hand, Ibn 'Arabī mentions that the meeting with Qurrat al-'Ayn and, therefore, the gestation of the poems from its matrix of four verses, took place in 604⁸, a figure which corresponds to the number of the 60 odes and the 600 verses of the final edition of the *Tarjumān al-ashwāq* (a title with a total numerical value of 6), contained thus in synthesis in the four verses of the poem that generated the work. On the other hand, 604 is equivalent ($6 + 4 = 10$) to 1, the value of both the word *Tarjumān* ($= 4 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 5 = 19/1 + 9 = 10 = 1$) and the word *ashwāq* (without article, $1 + 1 + 6 + 1 + 1 = 10/1$), the two terms of the book's title. We shall see later another approach to the structure 60+4.

There is one more very significant date concerning the composition of the *Tarjumān* only referred to in some early copies. The text of the manuscript copy Ragib Pasha 1453 (as well as the copy Manisa 6596) begins directly with the original preface (contained in all successive recensions), in the first person, after an initial brief mention of the author, saying,

I asked God Most High for inspiration (*istakhartu*) and I have gathered in this section (*juz'*) [of my poetic production] which I have called *The Interpreter of*

⁶ On the question of the six directions (*jihāt*) and the three dimensions (*ab'ād*) of the human constitution, see (Ibn 'Arabī 2017, vol. 6, pp. 300–1). On the six-fold character of the heart (Ibn 'Arabī 1911b, vol. 3, p. 305) and the illumination Ibn 'Arabī experienced in Fez in 593/1197, of which he says 'I had no sense of direction, as if I had become completely spherical', see (Ibn 'Arabī 1911b, vol. 2, p. 486; Hirtenstein 2010, p. 40).

⁷ See the references on this episode as translated by M. Gloton (Ibn 'Arabī 1996a, p. 51).

⁸ The episode (*hikāya*) with Qurrat al-'Ayn is dated by the author at the very end of the original text of the *Tarjumān* (see ms. Ragib Pasha 1453, fol. 202b, l. 1), where he states that it happened *precisely* (*khāṣṣatan*) the year 604. This copy of the *Tarjumān* is dated ten years later the fifth of Rajab of the year 614 h. in Malatīa (ll. 4–5) and it contains a certificate (*samā'*) of Ibn 'Arabī's direct audition and approval of the text which reads as follows: 'Says Muḥammad b. 'Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-'Arabī al-Ṭā'ī: 'The *faqīh*, *imām* and most complete scholar (*al-'ālim al-akmal*) 'Imād al-Dīn Ḥibr b. 'Alī b. 'Alī al-Barmakī has read in my presence this *juz'*, entitled *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, composed by me (*min inshā'i*), while I listened to him in the course of a single session (*majlīs wāḥid*) and I have given him permission to transmit from me (*al-ḥadīth 'annī*) the entirety of my transmissions (*riwāyātī*) and my own compositions (*muṣannafātī*) according to the conditions customary among the people of this purpose (*bayna ahl hādihā l-shā'n*) [it is interesting to note that this last *nūn* appears as a complete circle with the dot in the centre, symbolising the transmission of both exoteric and esoteric knowledge, this last corresponding to the otherwise invisible part of the circle in the common writing of the *nūn*] and I have formulated my [general] authorisation (*talaffaztu la-hu bi-l-ijāza*) to him on the third of Rajab of 614' (ms. Ragib Pasha 1453, fol. 202b, ll. 6–10). Because it was not reproduced in other copies, the particular date of the meeting with Qurrat al-'Ayn in 604 has not been mentioned by any scholar previously. On other related events of the year 604, see the appendix on chronology in Addas (1993). I will comment more on the significance and details of this and other dates in Beneito (2022, *sub voce*).

desires the verses I have composed, in the style proper to erotic and amatory lyric poetry (*ghazal / nasīb*), in the city of Mecca—with the good omen (*tayammun*) and the blessing conferred by the nobility of this place, whose elevation God has so exalted—from what was inspired to my in the [holy] months of Rajab, Sha‘bān and Ramaḍān—and exclusively in that period (*lā ghayr*)—of the year 611 . . . (ms. Ragib Pasha 1453, fol. 181b, ll. 8–12)⁹

As we see, in this opening, the author confers great importance to the fact that the *Tarjumān* has been inspired and composed in Makkah. The significance of those precise months and the year 611, among other aspects of this paragraph, will be analysed elsewhere in relation to the structure of the work (Beneito 2022). For now, the most relevant aspect of this initial fragment is its connection to the imagery of the Ka‘ba, since 6 + 1 + 1 equal the number of angles of the Temple (in correspondence with the 62 odes of the book, counting the two in the preface), another significant symbolic perspective.

1.3. The Ka‘ba, Heart of Existence, and the Human Heart

In order to understand some of Ibn ‘Arabī’s symbolical procedures, let us consider one of the main symbols implied in the *Tarjumān*: the transitive relationship of the Ka‘ba and the heart. Ibn ‘Arabī summarises some of the main aspects of the significance of the Temple in a few lines from *Futūḥāt*, part of a section in rhymed prose and poetry on the secret of the Ka‘ba¹⁰. It says,

This Ka‘ba is the heart of existence (*qalb al-wujūd*) and My Throne is for this heart a delimited body. Neither of these [neither My heavens nor My earth] encompasses Me, nor do I give notice of Me through what I have referred to [in prophetic revelation]. But My house, by virtue of which your heart ‘contains Me’—the purpose [of creation]—is deposited in your perceptible body, so that those who circumambulate your heart are the secrets (*asrār*), which are in the abode of your bodies when they circumambulate these stones. The circumambulators who circle [and carry] Our Throne that surrounds you [on the spiritual plane] are like those who circle around you in the world of [perceptible] tracing (*‘ālam al-takhṭīṭ*). Just as, with respect to you, the degree of the [composite] body is lower than that of your simple heart (*basīṭ*), so [is the degree of] the Ka‘ba with respect to the [lower degree of the] Throne that encompasses everything (*al-‘arsh al-muḥīṭ*). (Ibn ‘Arabī 2017, vol. I, pp. 203–6)

Note the symbolic parallelism—between Throne, body, and circle, on the one hand, and Ka‘ba, heart, and centre point, on the other—which, in intertextual reference to the divine hadith—where God speaks in the first person, saying ‘neither My heavens nor My earth can encompass Me, but the heart of My faithful servant encompass Me’ (Hirtenstein 2010, p. 28)—expresses this complex passage. Its final sentence reverses the order of the four terms suggesting a mirror relationship: (1) Ka‘ba: heart of existence (centre of the sphere); (2) Throne: delimited body (as an inclusive sphere); (3) Heart: Ka‘ba deposited in the body of the servant and centre of the sphere; (4) perceivable (*mashhūd*) Human Constitution, sphere that contains the heart (House of divinity) as the divine Throne surrounds the Ka‘ba.

With regard to divinity, the Ka‘ba, House of God, is superior in degree to the inclusive sphere of the Throne, just as the non-dimensional point or centre is superior to the circumference. In parallel, with respect to the perfect human being, a microcosmic synthesis, the Ka‘ba of his heart is, as a non-dimensional centre, superior in degree to the sphere of his

⁹ The same passage and date are reproduced in the ms. Manisa 6596 (*Tarjumān*, fols. 78a–91a, not dated), copied from the copy of a close disciple of Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī, Ibn ‘Arabī’s adoptive son. An annotation on the cover page, after the title, reads, ‘I have written this *risāla* and those that follow it from the copy of the virtuous Bahā’ al-Dīn b. Ḥāmid b. ‘Uthmān . . . one of the disciples of the *shaykh* and most complete guide (*min talāmīdh al-shaykh al-imām al-akmal*...) Ṣadr al-Dīn Qūnawī’ (fol. 78b, ll. 7–14). For the passage containing the date of composition 611 h., see fol. 79a, l. 6.

¹⁰ The passage rhymes in *-ūd -lumā* and *-īṭ* (three rhymes of numerical value 10 = 1), as well as *-ār* (of value 3).

body. Ibn ʿArabī uses the term ‘world of tracing’ (*ʿālam al-takhtīṭ*)¹¹ meaning the domain of relationships, the lines that link all the points of manifestation in geometry, writing, sound waves, rays of light . . . It is the domain of the First Intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*, where *ʿaql* = 2), that is, the first creation which is the letter *bā* (=2) with which the revelation begins (whether in the Torah or the Koran) and which implies the *dualitude* of the created with respect to the undifferentiated Unity of the unfathomable, non-dual principle, beyond any trace. The root of *ʿaql* does indeed mean ‘to bind’, as in the expression ‘to tie up’, and necessarily implies the dualitude of two: the point and the circle, the two points connected by a line. The drawn world of layout or ‘design’ (*takhtīṭ*, a term connected to *khatt*, ‘line’, ‘writing’) is the exterior and apparent (*ẓāhir*), that is to say, any domain that can be witnessed (*shuhūd*) with respect to absolute concealment (*ghayb muṭlaq*), or the visible world (*ʿālam al-shahāda*) with respect to the interior, intelligible world of the Order (*ʿālam al-amr*)¹².

The Kaʿba is to the human heart as the human constitution is to the divine Throne, which contains all existence in every ‘perceptible’ domain. However, only the heart contains the mystery of the divine Presence. As a fruit of symbolic transitivity, Ibn ʿArabī understands here the hadith in that sense: the heart, as the House of God, contains the divine Throne—that is, the entire existence as a manifestation of God in the likeness of the theomorphic human constitution (proper to man created in the image of God) in dimensional creation. Temple and Heart are thus the symbol and abode of the unlimited, non-dimensional Mystery; they are the veil that reveals the unconditioned, the point of all possibility that points, at the centre of the circle, to its hidden principle, to pure undifferentiated Unity. As Ibn ʿArabī explains,

When God created your body, He placed within it a Kaʿba, which is your heart. He made this temple of the heart the noblest of houses in the person of faith (*muʿmin*). He informed us that the heavens, in which there is the Frequented House (*al-bayt al-maʿmūr*), and the earth, in which there is the [physical] Kaʿba, do not encompass Him and are too confined for Him, but He is encompassed by this heart in the constitution of the believing human. What is meant here by ‘encompassing’ is knowledge of God. (Hirtenstein 2010, p. 27; translated from Ibn ʿArabī 1911b, vol. 3, p. 250)

As a significant example of symbolic condensation, this correlation of the cubic Temple, the centre of its sphere, and the human heart as Temple and centre, is fundamental to understand the dynamic of symbolic relationships, the imaginal experiences, and the theophanic manifestations that Ibn ʿArabī reports in the passage from *Tarjumān* that we are studying here, in particular, and in his writings in general.

Represented in Arabic as a square, the dot itself can be seen—from a three-dimensional perspective—as a six-sided cube. Such is for Ibn ʿArabī the shape of the heart with six faces and eight angles, but only four corners in the plane of the seven ritual turns, corresponding to the seven essential attributes in their circular unfolding¹³.

Within a sphere, 4, 6, 7, and 8 are thus fundamental figures of the symbol of the House, the Heart, the Throne, and the human constitution, as can be seen in many of the author’s texts, such as *Tāj al-rasāʾil* (Ibn ʿArabī 2018a).

1.4. On the Meaning of the Expression *Qurrat al-ʿayn*

Qurrat al-ʿAyn, the very name of the enigmatic maiden who appeared when Ibn ʿArabī was inspired by the four verses preceding the 60 poems¹⁴ of *The Interpreter of Desires*

¹¹ *Futūḥāt* contains only two mentions of the term *ʿālam al-takhtīṭ* (Ibn ʿArabī 2017, vol. I, pp. 205 and 366). See Winkel’s commentaries in (Ibn ʿArabī 2018c, p. 153).

¹² On this matter see also (Beneito and Hirtenstein 2021).

¹³ On the seven attributes and this correspondence, see (Ibn ʿArabī 2018c, pp. 148–51).

¹⁴ The translators, without exception, have numbered 61 odes following Nicholson, but it seems clear that the four-line poem in the preface has to be considered separately by virtue of its specificity. There are 60 odes that together symbolise the hexad (six faces of the Kaʿba and the heart, corresponding to the total value of the title of the work) represented by the letter *ṣād* = 60 (see Ibn ʿArabī 2018c, pp. 235–41) and the letter *wāw* = 6 (*ibid.* pp. 247–48), symbol of the Perfect Human Being.

as he wandered around Kaʿba is, in addition to a well-known expression of the Prophet Muhammad—in the hadith relating to the three things he loved most in this world, where he refers to the ‘freshness of the eye’ that results from the practice of prayer (Ibn ʿArabī 1946, pp. 218 and 225)—a term that frequently occurs in the works of Ibn ʿArabī, who uses it in a technical way alluding in various contexts to different expressive aspects of its symbolic polyvalence.

Thus, for example, in ‘Theophany 82’ of his *Kitāb al-Tajalliyāt*, the divine speech is addressed to Ibn ʿArabī himself calling him Qurrat ʿAynī (‘Freshness of My Eye’) and the commentary on the work notes as an explanation: ‘You are the one through whom I [God] see everything (*unzur fī kulli shayʿ*)’, adding that the meaning of the expression here is ‘the place [of the gaze] of the [divine] eye’ (Ibn ʿArabī 1988, p. 467).

In the *Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*, as we shall see more in detail in a following second part of this article, Ibn ʿArabī calls the Kaʿba itself by the name Qurrat al-ʿAyn (Ibn ʿArabī 2017, vol. IV, p. 102). This is an eminent example of symbolic transitivity and transjectivity (the permeable transfer of the interrelations of object, subject, condition, act, attribute, essence, etc.), fundamental aspects of the science of symbols in Ibn ʿArabī and, in particular, of its highest and most original expression in the imaginal domain, the science of letters and numbers¹⁵.

The Akbarian conception of *tajallī*, divine self-revelation or theophanic irradiation, is the hermeneutic key that allows the articulation of the relationships that arise by virtue of this symbolic transitivity in the thought and poetry of Ibn ʿArabī. His work constantly refers to a polyhedral, kaleidoscopic cosmivision in which the transjective manifestations have to be interpreted as much in relation to God as in relation to Man, the Book, the Universe, the Temple, the Names¹⁶, or the Angel. Therefore, in order to differentiate different relationships and perspectives of this transitivity, I propose throughout the text a series of neologisms that are necessary to specify different modalities and interrelationships of theophanic manifestation.

It should be understood that for Ibn ʿArabī, in a universally inclusive sense, all existence is a theophany. However, human beings are veiled in the domain of ordinary distinctive perception, so that they only perceive the theophanic nature of Reality when it is revealed to their inner vision through unveiling. Then the theophanic dimension of manifestation appears in the domain of creative Imagination. Thus, the perception of a particular theophany is linked to a particular moment of inspired unveiling.

Let us therefore briefly summarise the general meanings of the terms in the Arabic name of the Maiden:

The feminine term *qurra*, from the root *q-r-r*, means ‘comfort’, ‘relief’, ‘freshness’, ‘consolation’, ‘solace’ and, in that sense, ‘pleasure’, ‘joy’. By virtue of the original basic meaning of its lexical root, which, as can be deduced, metaphorically links cold – in a sense of relief from the desert heat – with solidity (as in reference to the solidity of ice), it also has the meanings of *qarār*: ‘stillness’, ‘permanence’, ‘rest’, ‘residence’, ‘dwelling’, ‘stability’.

On the other hand, the word *ʿayn*, which is also feminine, in addition to being the name of the letter so called, with a numerical value of 70 or 7, also means ‘eye’, ‘source’, ‘entity’, ‘identity’, ‘disc’ (for example, in the common expression *ʿayn al-shams*, ‘the solar disc’).

Thus the conjunction of the two terms can mean various interconnected realities that reveal multiple aspects of the mysterious Maiden.

Ibn ʿArabī often refers to the idea that there is only one unique *ʿayn* (*al-ʿayn al-wāḥida*), although on the plane of plurality there are an infinity of *aʿyān ṭābita*, eternal exemplars, latent realities, immutable entities, timeless prototypes hidden in divine knowledge... that

¹⁵ For a discussion on symbolic transitivity and transjectivity, see (Beneito 2022). On the relevance of the science of letters and numbers as *al-miftāḥ al-awwal*, ‘the First [hermeneutic] Key’, see (Ibn ʿArabī 2017, vol. 1, p. 282).

¹⁶ As an example of transjectivity in the context of a commentary on the divine Name al-Shahīd, see (Ibn ʿArabī 1996b, p. 345).

are shaped into an endless number of concrete eye-entities on the plane of manifestation when the existentiating light illuminates the corresponding latent eye-entities that constitute their spiritual support. Symbolically, every entity is, in a sense, the expression of a circle, of the sphere of a perceiving eye, and therefore of the universal sphere which encompasses all existence.

There is another dimension in which the letter *‘ayn*, its numerical value, and the numerical value of the letters in its name are highly significant in relation to *The Interpreter of Desires*. The structure of the work, as in other cases of Akbarian writings, is kaleidoscopic—that is, it responds simultaneously to several complementary structural conceptions. Without going into detail, what is important here is to understand that the book as a whole is symbolically a circle (on the two-dimensional plane) or a sphere (on the three-dimensional plane), that is, an *‘ayn*, an eye-entity that ‘interprets desires’: an allusion to the seven ritual cycles around the Ka’ba that correspond to the seven essential attributes. In this sense, Qurrat al-*‘Ayn* herself embodies this value 7 of the circumambulation. On the other hand, the numerical value of the name *‘ayn* ($70 + 10 + 50 = 130 = 13/1 + 3$) is equivalent to 4, the four corners of the Ka’ba. In this sense, Qurrat al-*‘Ayn* is the Ka’ba.

Therefore, the four inspiring verses of the poem are equivalent to a complete turn or circumambulation around the four corners of the Ka’ba. Moreover, considering its preceding numerical components as a tetraktys, 4 is equal to $1 + 2 + 3 + 4 = 10$, so that the initial tetrad is equivalent to a ten, after which follow 60 additional poems, i.e., six 10s. In a symbolic reading, each ten corresponds to one of the seven ritual turns (since the 10, as we have indicated, is contained in the four) and expresses the culmination of a cycle. If we consider 61 poems ($6 + 1$) we have the value seven of the letter *‘ayn*. If we consider seven 10s (for the value 10 of the four verses), then we have its value 70. Thus, symbolically, the *Tarjumān* is Qurrat al-*‘Ayn* herself or vice versa: more precisely, the *Tarjumān* is the *bibliophany* of Qurrat al-*‘Ayn*; Qurrat al-*‘Ayn* is the *gynaecophany* of the *Tarjumān*.

Naturally, this is only one possibility of interpretation, since the 60 odes themselves constitute a complete symbol: 60 is the numerical value of the letter *ṣād*—a letter that Ibn ‘Arabī considers graphically circular and to which he dedicates the longest and most personal section of the chapter on letters in the *Futūḥāt* (Ibn ‘Arabī 2018c, pp. 235–41). The name of the letter *ṣād* ($60 + 1 + 4$) is equivalent to $65/6 + 5 = 11 = Huwa$, the divine Ipseity, a fundamental symbol in the writings of Ibn ‘Arabī. The number 60 corresponds to the six faces of the Temple’s cube, the heart (*qalb* = 6), the title’s expression *Tarjumān al-ashwāq* (= 6) and the concept of Perfect Human Being (*al-insān al-kāmil* = 6), which is ultimately the very Interpreter of desires.

Before we proceed to comment on the passage, it seems fundamental to know that, in the Preface to the *Dhakhā’ir*, special reference is made to two hadiths that provide a written foundation for the imaginal transitivity of epiphanies. There is a significant expression in the proem of the *Tarjumān*, referring to the Prophet, where he is called *al-mutajallā ilay-hi bi-aḥsani l-ṣūra* (‘he to whom God reveals himself in the most beautiful form’). This refers to the hadith of the lordly theophany in the best of forms¹⁷. On the other hand, the expression *al-makhṣūṣ bi-l-kamāl al-kullī wa-tanzīl al-dihyī*—which only the Lebanese edition of the *Dhakhā’ir* (Ibn ‘Arabī 1995, p. 171) reproduces correctly—refers to the hadith according to which Gabriel appeared to the Prophet in the form of his young and beautiful contemporary Dihya¹⁸, thus as a *dihyī* angelophany which is also, therefore, an anthropophany, like the appearance of Qurrat al-*‘Ayn* under the image—which the text

¹⁷ This hadith (al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi‘*, Tafsīr al-Qur’ān, Book 47, Hadith 3541; al-Tabrizī, *Mishkāṭ al-maṣābiḥ* 725, Book 4, Hadith 154) says in Arabic,

أَتَانِي اللَّيْلَةَ رَبِّي تَبَارَكَ وَتَعَالَى فِي أَحْسَنِ صُورَةٍ ... فَوَضَعَ يَدَهُ بَيْنَ كَتِفَيْ حَتَّى وَجَدْتُ بَرْدَهَا بَيْنَ نَدْيِي أَوْ قَالَ فِي نَحْرِي فَعَلِمْتُ مَا فِي السَّمَوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ .

The expression ‘in the best form’ (*fi aḥsan ṣūra*) also resonates with the expression *fi aḥsan taqwīm* in Q 95: 4, referring to the creation of human being in the best form.

¹⁸ According to well-known transmissions (see for example Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Imān, 167; al-Tirmidhī, *Jāmi‘*, Manāqib, Book 49, Hadith 4010; al-Nasā’ī, *Sunan* 47/7, 4991), the angel Gabriel appeared to the Prophet under the appearance of Dihya b. Khalifa al-Kalbi, one of his companions (*ṣaḥāba*) whose face, according to the sources, stood out for its beauty.

does not make explicit, but suggests indirectly in the final preface of the *Dhakhā'ir*—of the young and learned lady called al-Nizām¹⁹, whose company Ibn 'Arabī frequented in Mecca.

In the introduction to the most extensive preface of the *Dhakhā'ir*, the initial salutation to the Prophet—where Ibn 'Arabī calls him (in affinity with the terms of his epistolary entitled *Tāj al-rasā'il*) by his personal name Muḥammad b. 'Abd Allāh (Ibn 'Arabī 2018a, p. 252), thus referring to his inclusive epiphanic condition (because the name Allāh contains all names)²⁰—is key to understanding the poem, and says of him

God bless the one to whom He reveals Himself in the most beautiful form (*ṣūra*)
[... the one], distinguished with universal perfection and the descent [of the
angel of revelation] in the image of Diḥya (*al-tanzīl al-diḥyā*) ...

This is a fundamental reference that announces the manifestation of al-Nizām and/or Qurrat al-ʿAyn as a *diḥyā* gynaecophany—that is, the possibility that the themenophany of the Ka'ba may take the imaginal form of al-Nizām²¹, just as Gabriel adopted for Muḥammad the appearance of the young Diḥya.

2. Progressive Commentary on the Episode with Qurrat al-ʿAyn

Let us now proceed by steps, after these preliminaries, to the study of the passage quoted at the beginning.

2.1. Around the Four Corners of the House of God

As the author states,

And part of it [i.e., the composition of the *Tarjumān*] is a conversation (*ḥikāya*)
[in the course of an episode] that took place (*jarat*)²² during the circumambulation
(*ṭawāf*) [of the Ka'ba]. I was circumambulating one night around the House [of
God], when my [spiritual] moment (*waqtī*) became propitious (*ṭāba*) and shook
me up (*hazza-nī*) a state I already knew ...

The term *ḥikāya* used here means both a 'conversation' and a 'story' or 'episode' and even, in a sense relevant to understanding the scope of the situation, a 'transmission'. While the word *ḥikāya*[t] is equivalent to $16 = 7$, in line with the seven ritual turns and the value 7 of the final letters of the rhyme of the poem below, the term *ṭawāf* is equivalent to $24 = 6$ (without the article), in line with the six faces of the Ka'ba and the value of the term *qalb*, 'heart', or to $28 = 1$ (with article), in accordance with the 28 letters of the alphabet and with the result of multiplying the seven ritual turns by the four corners of the temple, as well as with the value 1 of the final letter (*alif*) of the poem's rhyme.

Symbolically, an essential matter here is to understand that the *ṭawāf* implies the circulation of the square or the drawing of a circle around its central point. On the other hand, the whole episode takes place during the night, which in the context specially refers to the intimacy of interiority. That interior night, the poet circumambulates the House (*bayt*), a term that in Arabic also means 'verse' and is numerically equivalent to 7 ($2+1+4$). Then the personal spiritual instant, the *kairos* of the contemplative, became propitious (*ṭāba*, from the root of *ṭīb*, 'goodness', 'perfume') and an inner state with which Ibn 'Arabī was familiar moved him: a radical qualitative change takes place, a decisive movement from the exteriority of common perception to the interiority of imaginal vision.

¹⁹ On this character and her signification, see (Ibn 'Arabī 1996a, pp. 19, 29–34), where Gloton's very rich commentary does not differentiate al-Nizām from Qurrat al-ʿAyn.

²⁰ See (Ibn 'Arabī 1996b, pp. 30–32).

²¹ Note that the name of this beautiful woman, epitome of virtues, means 'harmony', 'order (of the cosmos)', and 'poetry' (*nazm*). Nizām is equivalent to 18 (= al-Ṣamad, thus $1 + 8 = 9$) in the western (or *gharbi*) *abjad* system favoured by Ibn 'Arabī and to 19 (= *wujūd* = *wāḥid* = $1 + 9 = 1$) in the eastern (*sharqi*) system, but with the article, more significantly (as this is how she is mentioned in the prologue), al-Nizām is equivalent to $22/2 + 2 = 4$ (corners of the Ka'ba), in western system, or $23 (= 5, \text{value of the letter and pronoun } hā')$ which symbolises the *ḥuwiyya* or Divine Identity throughout the book, in eastern system.

²² The verb *jarat* is in the same form and lexical root of the term *jāriya* (its active participle) which will later be commented on in relation to Qurrat al-ʿAyn as *jāriya*.

The use of the expression *hazza-nī* alludes to the divine imperative addressed to Mary in the Quran: ‘And move (*huzzi*) towards you the trunk of the palm tree . . . ’ (Q 19:25). This is followed by the instruction ‘. . . and refresh your eyes with joy (*qarrī ‘ayn^{an}*)’ (Q 19:26), where the expression used, with the same terms of the expression *qurraṭ al-‘ayn²³*, may also be understood as ‘refresh yourself [as an eye-entity] with joy’. The verb *hazza* also means ‘making someone rejoice’, so that the whole sentence implies goodness and joy.

2.2. Circumambulating on the Sand: The Imaginal Geomancy of the Interpreter

And he goes on to say;

I then left the paved space (*balāt*) to [get away from] people (*li-ajli l-nās*) and continued to walk around on the sand (*al-raml*).

This mention of the sandy ground, not tiled and therefore, so to speak, unconditioned, is more significant than it may seem at first sight. The expression offers a certain ambivalence: while it is understood in the first instance that he ‘came out of the tiled area by [moving away from] the people’, it can also be understood that he ‘came out of the pavement [added to the ground around the temple] in order to [facilitate the movement of] people’, so that he simply came out of the space of plurality and limited perception, a sense which in the context of the story is also revealing. Ibn ‘Arabī, on entering that spiritual state which shakes him up, moves to the original naked land of inspiration. The term *al-raml* is equivalent to $13 = 4 (1 + 3 + 2 + 4 + 3)$, including the article), in line with the four verses of the poem below²⁴, or to $9 (2 + 4 + 3)$, excluding the article), corresponding to the value nine of the extended rhyme *-kū* of the poem (written *kāf-wāw-alif = 2 + 6 + 1 = 9*). Although no translator or previous study has pointed this out before, this connection between the sand and the four verses is extremely significant. The verses are composed precisely in the meter called *al-ramal*, a term that in common writing without vowels is written in exactly the same way as sand (رمل) and therefore has the same numerical value. Technically, the word *ramal* also designates the light steps of the pilgrim during the first three ritual turns of the Ka‘ba. However, there is also a more complex symbolism here, related to the fact that the term *rammāl* not only means ‘the one who works with sand’, but also a ‘geomancer’, which came often to imply an ‘astrologer geomancer’ practising as well the science of letters (Melvin-Koushki 2020, p. 790).

Thus, the inspirational four-lines poem as well as the previous hermeneutic ode in the preface (*Kulla-mā adhkuru-hu . . .*), with 16 lines, also in the same meter *ramal*, are associated with the sand (*raml*). As we shall see, there seems to be a significant confluence of the use of this poetic rhythm and the particular number of verses of these two poems in the preface of the book, which would indicate a symbolic relationship between the verses number and the practice of geomancy. These poems describe, respectively, 40 images relating to epiphanies of the Beloved (in 16 verses, with a rhyme in *mīm*, of value 40, corresponding to the 40 images) and four questions (in four verses, connected to four degrees). Those numbers directly correspond to the four lines and 16 positions or figures in the patterns used in Islamic geomancy, a science which is precisely called ‘*ilm al-raml*, ‘science of [the interpretation of] the sand’. When Ibn ‘Arabī specifies that his encounter with *Qurraṭ al-‘Ayn* took place in the sand—which is also the ‘earth’—he is suggesting that the *Tarjumān* could be understood as a geomantic—that is, symbolic—interpretation, in a poetic understanding, of both the Vast Earth of Imagination and the Ka‘ba *herself*. Effectively, the House, in consideration of its four corners surrounded by sand, the seven ritual turns ($16/1 + 6 = 7$) performed by Ibn ‘Arabī on the sand—and, perhaps, the sum of the eight angles (upper and lower) of the visible or terrestrial Ka‘ba and the 8 of the invisible, celestial or interior Ka‘ba (Beneito 2006, p. 38), so that $8 + 8 = 16$ —combines

²³ There are six other related expressions in the Quran (see Q 20:40, 25:74, 28:9, 28:13, 32:17, and 33:51).

²⁴ It is also interesting to note that all the hemistiches of the four verses end in *wāw-alif (= 6 + 1)*, except the third which ends with the word *darā*, with the same value ($4 + 2 + 1$), in correspondence with the seven circumambulations.

symbolically main numerical relations associated with this science of Arabic and Islamic roots.

Matthew Melvin-Koushki summarises in a paragraph the fundamental terms (denominations and elements) of geomancy or ‘science of sand/earth’ that are needed here to show the intimate symbolic correlation that Ibn ‘Arabī allusively establishes between geomancy and the composition of the *Tarjumān* in the passage we are analysing:

The Latin term *geomantia* imprecisely translates the Arabic ‘ilm al-raml, the “science of sand”; like other Arabic terms for the art (*khaṭṭ al-raml*, *ḍarb*, *ṭarq*), this refers to its original procedure of drawing 16 random series of lines in the sand or dirt to generate the first four tetragrams of a geomantic Reading [. . .] (Melvin-Koushki 2020, p. 788)²⁵

Let us consider those Arabic alternative terms for geomancy in relation to the images we find in the *Tarjumān*. Note that while Ibn ‘Arabī circumambulates over the sand, he describes the line of the circle. The practice of *khaṭṭ al-raml* precisely means ‘drawing lines on the sand’. There, he refers to the ‘blow’ (*ḍarba*) of a hand by using the word *ḍarb* that also designates geomancy. Even the term *ṭarq* can be understood here, either as a ‘blow’ or as a reference to the path (*ṭarīq*)—both the circular way of circumambulation and ‘the path to the heart’ (*al-ṭarīq ilā l-qalb*)—, a term with which Ibn ‘Arabī explains the meaning of the word *shī‘b* (‘mountain path’) which occurs in the second verse of the inspirational four-line poem in *ramal*. Thus, we see that all the various names for this art of ‘sand’ are symbolically present or evoked in the passage that describes the meeting with Qurrat al-‘Ayn.

The *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, so deeply inspired by its style and motifs in the old poetry connected to the desert landscapes of Arabia, often refers to the image of the loving poet following traces in the sand in search of the beloved: thus the geomancer’s search becomes a metaphor of the lover’s journey through desert and mountains, which is itself a metaphor of the *viator* (*sālik*), the pilgrim traveling towards the Real, interpreting His signs in the horizons and within his own self as an *hermeneut* (hermeneutic traveller) of the worlds. Through this transparency of perspectives, topography—in particular that of the Hijaz and the sacred places connected to the Islamic pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) -, becomes in the *Tarjumān* the imaginal geography of the spiritual journey.

Let us remember that describing one of the special privileges he had been granted, the Prophet of Islam said, ‘The [entire] earth was made a place of worship for me’ (*ju‘ilat lī al-arḍ masjidan*)²⁶ (Hirtenstein 2010, p. 20). This universal mosque of the entire Earth is thus the referent for contemplative geomancy.

We find that each figure or position in the pattern of 16 figures of the science of sand consists in turn of four elements (lines or dots), so that there are a total of 64 signs between dots and lines²⁷, precisely in correspondence with the 60 odes of the *Tarjumān* and its four initial foundational verses (60 + 4) or with the 60 poems and the four poetic pieces (the two

²⁵ On the same page we read, ‘As with I Ching trigrams, the four lines of a geomantic figure (*shakl*) are generated by the odd (*fard*) or even (*zawj*) result of each line, creating a binary code represented as either one dot (*nuqṭa*) or two dots respectively—hence the science’s alternative name of ‘ilm al-nuqṭa or ‘ilm al-niqāṭ, whence its close association with lettrism (*‘ilm al-ḥurūf*), coeval Arabic twin to Hebrew kabbalah. This binary code is then deployed according to set procedures to capture the flux patterns of the four elemental energies (fire, air, water, earth) as a means to divine past, present and future events, and indeed the status of every thing or being in the sublunar realm’. This theme will be further developed in our book *El compás de la inspiración*.

²⁶ Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ*, Masājid, 3.

²⁷ Melvin-Koushki (2020, p. 789) adds, ‘The number of possible combinations of figures in a geomantic tableau is 16⁴, or 65,536 in all. Each of the 16 geomantic figures acquired a full suite of specific elemental, astrological, calendrical, numerical, lettrist, humoral, physiognomical and other correspondences; the first 12 houses of the geomantic chart were likewise mapped onto the 12 planetary houses, and occasionally constructed in the form of a horoscope. Detailed information can thus be derived from the figures and their relationships about virtually any aspect of human experience, whether physical, mental or spiritual, whether past, present or future’. This has to be related to the verse in the ode 11 of the *Tarjumān* where Ibn ‘Arabī refers to himself, symbolically, as a *munajjim* or ‘astrologer’ (Ibn ‘Arabī [1955] 2003, p. 46). Note that geomancy is a very inclusive science: ‘Arabo-Persian geomancy in its mature form is predicated on the deployment of cycles (sg. *dā‘ira*), or specific orders of the 16 figures (sg. *taskīm*), to reveal with precision such categories of data as the following: numbers, letters, days, months, years, astral bodies and divisions, body parts, physical and facial characteristics, minerals, precious stones, plants and plant products, animals and animal products, birds, fruits, tastes, colors, places, directions, regions, topographies, genders, social classes, nations, weapons, diseases, etc.’ (Melvin-Koushki 2020, p. 790).

preliminary odes and the two isolated verses of the final preface), as well as with the year 604, the date of the meeting with Qurrat al-‘Ayn already mentioned²⁸.

Bearing in mind that both poems are in *ramal*, the number 64 also results from multiplying the 16 verses of the first poem, corresponding to the 16 figures of the geomantic diagram, by the four verses of the inspirational poem, the matrices of the book, corresponding to the four elements of each geomantic figure, such that $16 \times 4 = 64$.

It should be understood that the expression Qurrat al-‘Ayn (‘Stability of the Sphere’, or ‘of the ‘eye’ or ‘of the disc’ as a sphere) is equivalent to seven (*qur[r]at*) of four (‘*ayn*, without the article) in correspondence with 16 ($1 + 6 = 7$) figures for four elements. With another variant of calculation (counting *hā* for the *tā*), Qurrat al-‘Ayn is directly equivalent to 16, in precise correspondence with the value of ‘Ayn al-Shams wa-l-Bahā²⁹, ‘Disc of the Sun and [Source] of Splendour’, the alternative nickname of al-Nizām in the preface to the *Dhakhā’ir* (Ibn ‘Arabī 1995, p. 173). Therefore, we note that al-Nizām herself is dubbed ‘Ayn, in clear correlation with the name Qurrat al-‘Ayn, indicating that, in a sense, the two are one and the same entity.

A question arises here: did the appellation Qurrat al-‘Ayn hide the personal name of Nizām in the first recension of the preface before the commentary was added together with her name in the second recension? The fact is that, in support of this idea, the word *nizām* appears six times in the poems of the *Tarjumān*³⁰.

2.3. The Arrival of the Four Verses

He goes on to say,

Then some verses (*abyāt*) presented themselves to me (*ḥadarat-nī*) and I began to declaim them, making them audible to myself (*naḥs-ī*) and to whoever might have been with me (*man yalī-nī*), if (*law*) anyone (*aḥad*) could have been there (*hunāka*).

When the author says, before he realised the presence of Qurrat al-‘Ayn, ‘some verses presented themselves to me’, he implies that the verses appeared to him, in the domain of imaginal perception, endowed with an autonomous entity: they are inspired to him as living imaginal presences. The word *abyāt* (= 9, as in the value of the complete extensive rhyme of the four-line poem³¹, which is also the value of *raml*), is a plural of the same word *bayt*, ‘house’, previously used in the text, so that the term ‘verses’ is associated with the Ka’ba as House: the four verses are dwellings (the four corners) of the House (Ka’ba) and are, by the numerical value of the word and the value 9 of the extended rhyme in the poem, an expression of all the figures from one to nine that make up the matrix of all language.

‘... and then I began to recite them ...’, i.e., the four verses of the four verses poem *Layta shi’rī* which are quoted below. The verb used (*anshada*) means ‘to recite’ or ‘to sing’, but it also has the prior meanings of ‘to seek’ and ‘to pursue’ (as when the poet seeks the beloved by following her trail) and, in the first form, ‘to beg’ (for example, to ask of God, since the search is itself a supplication). Although this verb is entirely common to introduce the quotation of a poem, in the deeply conscious language of Ibn ‘Arabī the four verses are thus presented, in the process of recitation, as a search in the course of the ritual turning around the four corners of the temple. These four verses include four questions—even if the translation does not fully reflect the interrogative style—as if they were a plea for an answer.

²⁸ As for the number of verses in the *Dhakhā’ir*, it is interesting to note that in the 1995 Lebanese edition, the preliminary poem incorporates three verses that only appear in a single manuscript. If these three added lines are counted together with the addition of two lines to the original ode 10 and the two isolated verses at the beginning of the preface to the *Dhakhā’ir*, the final total of the verses in the work (597—that is, the initial 598, minus one omitted in the final version—plus 7) would be equivalent to 604, precisely the year of the meeting with Qurrat al-‘Ayn.

²⁹ Counting the western values (1 of *shīn* and 3 of *sīn*), ‘*Ayn al-shams wa-l-bahā*’ = $7 + 1 + 5 / 1 + 3 + 1 + 4 + 3 / 6 + 1 + 3 + 2 + 5 + 1 = 13 + 12 + 18 = 4 + 3 + 9 = 16 = 7$. See the mention of this nickname in Ibn ‘Arabī ([1955] 2003, p. 8).

³⁰ The term *nizām* can be found six times in the following five odes: 4/verse 2, 19/16, 28/14 (twice), 45/14 and 54/4. The term *qurra* is not used in the poems. The term ‘*ayn*’ appears four times in the poems (in 24/9, 27/11, 44/2 and 44/6), i.e., six times in total in the *Tarjumān* if we count the only two mentions of the word in the preface (in the names Qurrat al-‘Ayn and ‘Ayn al-Shams). The related word ‘*m*’ (in plural), with different vowels but the same writing, appears twice in 8/5 and 12/5.

³¹ The full rhyme—not just the *rāwī* or main rhyming letter—is composed graphically of the letters *kāf-wāw-alif* (= $2 + 6 + 1 = 9$).

'... making them audible to myself ...', that is, to 'my own soul' (*nafs* = 5 + 8 + 3 = 16 = 7 personal attributes of the self in correspondence with the ritual turns)³², so that it can be understood that they were declaimed inwardly, and to 'whoever is [or might have been] with me' (*man yalī-nī* = [4 + 5] + [1 + 3 + 1 + 5 + 1] = 20)³³. Note that the verb used is from the lexical root of *walāya*, the relationship of proximity to God. The expression may be understood as external spatial proximity 'whoever is next to me', but it can also be understood as an allusion to a co-presence within.

'... if someone could had been there': the author uses here the conditional particle *law*, which expresses unreality and impossibility, instead of *in*—which would express the possibility of realization—, with the sense therefore of 'if there had been someone (who was not...)³⁴'. This leads us to interpret that 'there' was only the imaginal presence of his own anima or *nafs* (a feminine word corresponding to the figure of Qurrat al-*ayn*) and there was no place for any otherness apart from his spiritual *alter ego*. Is Qurrat al-*ayn* the name of an imaginal presence of the author's 'anima'?

From the point of view of arithmosophy, we may interpret that Ibn 'Arabī was reciting the verses internally to Muḥammad (= 20, the author's own name, that is, to 'himself') and to the Ka'ba (al-Ka'ba, with final graphic *h* = 20). It should also be considered that the sum of 20 (*nafsī* in the eastern system) + 20 (*man yalī-nī*), equal to 4(0), is equivalent to the four corners and the number of the verses, corresponding to the terms 'there' (*hunāka* = 13 = 4) and 'someone' [lit. 'one'] (*aḥad* = 13 = 4) which repeat the value 4 and the underlying unity (4 = 10). Thus, the epiphanies of the Temple and the Poem are perceived as spiritual presences and mediations in the realm of a single *nafs* and not as 'someone else' added to the outside of the scene: it is about the otherness lived within one's own unity³⁵.

Two verses from Ibn 'Arabī's major *Dīwān* particularly support this understanding. He says concerning *qurrat al-ayn*: 'The "freshness of the eye" is nothing other than my own eye-entity (*aynī*), for all passionate love is between me and me' (Ibn 'Arabī 2018b, p. 389)³⁴. And in another poem, he explains,

The most joyful day for me is a day in which I see the light of my own eye-entity (*aynī*): / this is the eye of the heart, a full moon, a freshness of the eye (*qurrat ayn*) for every eye-entity. / My beloved, God did not separate (*farrāqa*) in between your breaths (*anfāsu-kum*) and me. (Ibn 'Arabī 2018b, p. 151)³⁵

So Qurrat al-*ayn* may also be understood as Ibn 'Arabī's own eye-entity, i.e., as his very self, which is the eye-entity of the heart and a joyful freshness for all eye-entities.

Then follow the four enigmatic verses³⁶ of the passage. I will only add now that the four questions contained in the verses correspond to the four degrees of love that Ibn 'Arabī defines later in his commentary on them. The poem is fundamentally about the High Dwelling of Perplexity (*ḥayra*)—a station implying the reconciliation of opposites, the integrating—but ambivalent—experience of the essential unity in contrast to the multiple

³² In the eastern system *nafs-ī* = 5 + 8 + 6 [+ 1 of the pronoun] = 19 (= 1, without pronoun) or 20, value of the name al-Ka'ba(h), with article, and of the name Muḥammad.

³³ '... if (*law* = 9) had been (*kāna* = 9) there (*hunāka* = 13 = 4) someone [one] (*aḥad* = 13 = 4)', equivalent to saying, 'if the 9 (rhyme) were there 4 (verses) or 'if multiplicity were there only unity'. The poem is thus in the tone of unreality in consonance with this particle *law* that also appears in the third hemistich of the poem with the same meaning, that is, the non-realisation of the answer to those four questions of the poet that necessarily add to the perplexity of lovers.

³⁴ In the context, it is relevant to note that this is the first verse of a seven lines poem on the *ayn*. The letter *ayn* has a value 7 corresponding to the seven verses and to the value of the rhyme in *-aynī* (1 + 5 + 1 = 7). The poem can also be found in ms. Leiden Or 2687, fol. 54b. In Arabic, the verse reads as follows:

ما قَرَّةُ الْعَيْنِ غَيْرَ عَيْنِي فَيَبِينِي كَانِ الْهَوَىٰ وَيَبِينِي

³⁵ In this short poem, fully translated here, the third final verse is almost the same that concludes the previous poem whose first verse I just quoted. Only a pronoun changes: 'God did not separate (*farrāqa*) in between your breaths (*anfāsu-hu*) and me' (Ibn 'Arabī 2018b, p. 389). Note that the word *anfās* is significantly connected to the word *nufūs* (souls). In the continuation of this article, to appear soon, the figure of the Fatā inspiring *Futūḥāt makkīyya* (Ibn 'Arabī 2018c, chp. 1, pp. 131–58) will also be considered at the light of this perspective.

³⁶ I do not proceed to analyse these verses now, as their detailed study, together with Qurrat al-*ayn*'s questions, Ibn 'Arabī's later explanation and Abdullah Bosnevi's late and revealing commentary, will be the subject of a large section in my book *El compás de la inspiración*.

theophany and of its language par excellence, Poetry—the origin of all manifested things (Addas 2016, p. 153)—as the domain of symbols.

2.4. The Subtle Touch of a Hand and the Appearance of the Maiden (*jāriya*)

Then, after this poetic insemination, the passage continues:

I felt (*ash'ur*) nothing but the touch³⁷, between my shoulders (*katifay-ya*), of the palm of a hand (*kaff*)³⁸ softer (*alyan*) than silk (*al-khazz*)³⁹. When I turned around, [I found that] there was a maiden (*jāriya*) from among the daughters of Rūm.

The entire passage implies the arrival of a subtle but palpable presence that is *imaginalised*. Just when the poem (*shī'r*) arrives - which begins with the term *shī'rī* ('my perception of the veiled . . .')—the poet says with a verb of the same form and root: 'I felt... (*ash'ur*) . . . a touch . . . '—in correspondence with the shake that affected him—and here he turns—it can also be understood that he does so inwards—and the Maiden is 'there', characterized—as we will see in the text—by six aspects and four attributes.

Let us recapitulate by considering the hadith implicitly associated with the episode: when Ibn 'Arabī relates that he felt that 'the palm of one hand (*kaff* = 10/1) softer (*alyan*) than silk touched him between his two shoulders (*bayna katifay-ya*, where *katifay-ya* = 6 as the expression *kaffu-hu* in the text)' he is alluding to the aforementioned hadith which refers that the Prophet contemplated his Lord 'in the most beautiful of forms (*fī aḥsan ṣūra*)', the same literal expression of the *Dhakḥā'ir*'s poem, and that this lordly manifestation put his hand between his shoulder blades (*fa-waḍa'a kaffa-hu bayna katifay-ya*). Thus, Ibn 'Arabī felt a slight impact at the centre of his neck's base, just as the Prophet felt the hand of the angel. When he says before that the state was already known to him, he might have been referring to this Prophetic precedent. He then refers to the 'maiden (*jāriya*) from among the daughters of Rūm', that is, a young woman who came from lands previously 'Roman', that is, Greek, Byzantine—then connected to philosophy and associated with Jesus and Mary. We suggest that this Maiden is to be understood as the themenophany of the Ka'ba, as a lordly epiphany 'in the most beautiful of forms', in this case in an imaginal *ḍiḥyī* mode of the human form of al-Nizām ('Ayn al-Shams . . .), whose attributes of beauty are described in the Preface (final version of the *Dakḥā'ir*) in very similar terms to those describing Qurrat al-'Ayn.

If we analyse the alphanumeric value of the key expressions in the passage, we see that the word 'maiden' (*jāriya* = 3 + 1 + 2 + 1 + 5)⁴⁰ is equivalent to 12 (= 3), while *min banāt al-Rūm* (4 + 5 / + 2 + 5 + 1 + 4 / + 1 + 3 + 2 + 6 + 4 = 9 + 12 + 16 = 37 = 3 + 7) is equivalent to 10 (allusion to plural unity), so that together (12 + 10 = 22 / 2 + 2 = 4), they correspond to the four corners of the Ka'ba and the four verses of the poem *Layta shī'rī*. According to this perspective, this poem has to be understood, by the nature of its inspiration and its condition of literary matrix of all the further development of the *Tarjumān*, as a *poemophany*, i.e., an epiphany in the form of a poem. We also see, on the other hand, that, without the article, Rūm has the same value 12 (= 1 + 2 = 3) as *jāriya*, which could allude, among other things, to the triad of relations that an epiphany entails: love-lover-beloved, reflected for example in the verse of the *Tarjumān* that says, 'My Beloved is one and triple' (Ibn 'Arabī [1955] 2003, 11, p. 46). On the other hand the value 7 of al-Rūm

³⁷ As in other cases, I try as far as possible to maintain the literalness and syntax of the expression, because although translating 'I felt the touch of a hand . . . ' would be more fluid, the author's expressions contain subtleties that would be lost by altering the structure of the sentence. Here denial introduces us into a climate of ambivalence and rules out any other perception: 'I felt nothing but the touch of a hand . . . ', that is, everything else vanished in that sensation of the spiritual instant.

³⁸ The successive translators of the work have not indicated that here there is a very significant allusion to the hadith in which the Prophet says, ' . . . and [the angel] placed the palm of his hand between my shoulders (*fa-waḍa'a kaffa-hu bayna katifay-ya*)'. See above note 17.

³⁹ The word *khazz* (= 4; with the article = 8, as *ḍarba* = 8), which in addition to 'silk' also means in contrast 'to prick' or 'to wound', resonates here, as an alliteration and play on related words, with the verb *hazz* (to shake) used before. The intensity of the blow, the shudder and the change of state is, nonetheless, as soft as silk and, at the same time, as intense as an open wound when pricked.

⁴⁰ In the major system 3 + 1 + 200 + 10 + 5 = 219. However, if alternatively the *tā' marbūṭa* is counted with value *tā'* = 400 (instead of the graphic value 5 of *hā'*), then *jāriya(t)* (3 + 1 + 200 + 10 + 400 = 614 / 6 + 1 + 4) is equivalent to 11, corresponding to the name Muḥammad (= 92 / 9 + 2 = 11) and to the divine name Huwa.

with the article ($12 + 4 = 16 / 1 + 6 = 7$) is particularly revealing, as it comes to mean that the Maiden is a daughter of the 7, which is equivalent to saying ‘daughter of the 7 ritual turns to the four corners’, that is to say, the circulation of the square, or ‘daughter of the seven abodes or celestial Ka’ba-s in the successive spheres of ascension.

Furthermore, the first four figures of Arab geomancy are called ‘mothers’, and the next four derived from these are called daughters (*banāt*). As we see in this passage, Qurrat al-‘Ayn is said to be ‘[one] of the daughters of Rūm (*min banāt al-Rūm*)’, where the term al-Rūm is precisely equivalent to 16, the number of the geomancy figures. These two initial tetrads of geomancy can also be correlated with the four upper and the four lower angles of the Ka’ba. In any case, we find here another possible symbolic correlation between the episode of inspiration of the *Tarjumān* and the science of sand⁴¹.

Note that the word *jāriya*, ‘girl’, ‘maiden’, ‘servant’, is first of all an active participle that also means ‘current’, ‘in progress’, ‘actual’, ‘in circulation’. This term or others from the same lexical root are used by Ibn ‘Arabī in similar contexts, referring to both the Ka’ba and the Ark of creation (*markab*) or divine Throne (Ibn ‘Arabī 2018a, p. 249). In a sense, *jāriya* meaning ‘servant’ should be understood in connection to the notion of the inclusive name ‘Abd Allāh, since the Maiden is, certainly, a Servant of God. In another sense, Qurrat al-‘Ayn, the interlocutor of the *Tarjumān*, is presented here as a feminine epiphany or *gynocophany* of the cosmic Throne—connected to the eight carriers of the Throne—that is to say, as a *thronophany* or *cosmophany* in one sense and, in another sense, as a *themenophany* of the temple of the Ka’ba (with eight vertices) in affinity with the epiphanic figure of the Fatā ($8 + 4 + 1 = 13 / 1 + 3 = 4$, with article al-Fatā = 8), the Knight or anthropophany that inspired *al-Futūḥāt al-makiyya* (The openings revealed in Mecca) in the very same enclosure of the Ka’ba (Ibn ‘Arabī 2018c, chapter 1).

The ‘Greek’ origin of the young Maiden may also refer to an intense whiteness of her appearance, that is, either to her luminosity as a *luminophany* (in fact the term *tajallī*, because of its lexical root, implies the luminous dimension of an irradiation), or to a *chromatophany* of white brilliance. Subtly, this description seems to refer to a “feminine”, luminous and ‘circular’ epiphany (which is manifested in the circumambulation as *jāriya*, ‘circulating’) of the Ka’ba. In fact, given that in the first brief preface that appears in the copies of the original *Tarjumān*⁴², prior to the addition of the later commentary, there is not even a mention of al-Nizām, it is possible to understand that somehow the work is originally ‘dedicated’, even if this is not explicitly formulated, to Qurrat al-‘Ayn. Nonetheless, it certainly seems that Qurrat al-‘Ayn, as suggested, adopted the imaginal form of al-Nizām, since both—in this sense only one—receive a very similar praise from the author. In this sense, by virtue of the transparency of figures, Qurrat al-‘Ayn would be a *dihyī* gynecophany with the appearance of al-Nizām.

We may consider that just as the *Futūḥāt* is finally dedicated to al-Mahdawī, Ibn ‘Arabī’s companion, although it was inspired by the spiritual Fatā, in a similar way the *Tarjumān*/*Dhakhā’ir* is subsequently dedicated to al-Nizām, although it was conceived under the inspirational presence of Qurrat al-‘Ayn, in conjunction with her as a gynecophany.

Once we conceive of the possibility that the imaginal Maiden took the form of al-Nizām, just as Gabriel in some visions of the Prophet took the appearance of Ḍihya al-Kalbī, we may understand better the subsequent explicit dedication to al-Nizām in the *Dhakhā’ir*. From this perspective, the collection of odes is dedicated to Nizām/Qurrat al-‘Ayn (‘Ayn al-shams wa-l-bahā’). The correspondence between the total number of verses in the work (598 [$5 + 9 + 8 = 22 / 2 + 2 = 4$] in the original version) and the year in which the author met al-Nizām on his arrival in Mecca reinforce the idea of an original implicit dedication to Nizām herself. Both maidens also share the condition of not being Arabs (one from Rūm,

⁴¹ In the geomantic tableau or shield chart (*takht*), ‘from right to left, the first four figures in the top row are termed Mothers (*ummahāt*), which are combined to produce the second four in the same row, termed Daughters (*banāt*); the four figures the Mothers and Daughters produce in the next row are termed Nieces (*ḥafīdāt, mutawallidāt*) . . . ’ (Melvin-Koushki 2020, p. 789).

⁴² See, for example, ms. Manisa 6596, fol. 78b.

the other Persian or Iraqi), i.e., coming from another contrasting land that symbolises a heritage of ancestral wisdom.

2.5. Six Aspects and Four Attributes of the Maiden

He goes on to say,

I have never seen a more beautiful face, nor [heard] sweeter language, nor more penetrating glosses, nor more subtle meanings, nor allusions so delicate, nor conversations so graceful. She is ahead of [all] the people of her time in grace, courtesy, beauty and knowledge. Then she said [to me]: ‘My Lord, how hast thou said [when declaiming . . .]?’ And I answered [repeating the first verse . . .].

As we have seen, once the Maiden appears, the poet enumerates precisely six aspects of Qurrat al-‘Ayn’s virtues, corresponding to the six faces of the cube, and then mentions four further attributes, in correlation with the four corners of the Ka‘ba and the four degrees of love commented on at the end of the section. The precise geometry of these descriptive attributes shows us once again that, in one sense, Qurrat al-‘Ayn is the very Ka‘ba itself.

Then Qurrat al-‘Ayn comments verse by verse in a critical tone that shows her mastery revealing, in an ambivalent way, certain keys to the poem. The Maiden goes so far as to exclaim aloud (*ṣāḥat*) with amazement: ‘How strange that you . . . !’, as she questions the poet. At the end of her observations on the fourth verse, Ibn ‘Arabī addresses the Maiden for the last time in the story.

2.6. On the Name and Ascent of the Maiden and the Imaginal Earth

I asked her: ‘Cousin (*yā Bint al-khāla*), what is your name?’ and she said: ‘Qurrat al-‘Ayn (Pleasure of the Eye)’. [To which] I replied: ‘[The pleasure is] mine (*lī*)’.

At the very end of their conversation about the verses, the poet transcribes this final dialogue in which he addresses Qurrat al-‘Ayn in familiar terms. Their very brief exchange is of extraordinary subtlety. In a sense the last expression is a gallantry of the most refined courtesy: when she says that she is called ‘Pleasure of the eye’, the poet replies, with the elegance of only two letters, that the pleasure is his, saying that the Maiden’s name evokes the same joyful repose he feels on meeting her. In another sense, he is literally affirming (as is the first sense of the preposition *li-*) ‘[You are] mine’, meaning that she is ‘his’ Qurrat al-‘Ayn. That is, she is an inner presence of his own being, or more, his own ‘ayn (= 13/1 + 3 = 4 = *lī*), his own essence manifesting itself in the form of a spiritual female counterpart, the epiphany of the inner Ka‘ba of his heart.

After this significant conversation, linked to the inspiration of these four verses that originated the collection of odes called *Tarjumān al-ashwāq*, Ibn ‘Arabī explains that he contemplated in her female presence “what nobody has previously described about the four subtle knowledges” (*laṭā‘if al-ma‘ārif al-arba‘*)⁴³. Then, in the *Dhakhā‘ir*, he immediately begins after this explanation his own “Commentary on the four verses” which he concludes in parallel by speaking about the four modes of love which, evidently, correspond to the four subtle modes of knowledge and to the four verses of the poem, and thus to four moments of a circumambulation that passes by the four corners of the Ka‘ba.

Before asking her name, Ibn ‘Arabī addresses Qurrat al-‘Ayn as *Bint al-khāla*⁴⁴, ‘Daughter of the maternal aunt’, where *khāla(h)* = 15/1 + 5 = 6, so that the expression would mean ‘daughter of the 6’, or ‘daughter of the Ka‘ba’ as a cubic temple with six faces, or ‘daughter of the heart’. On the other hand, the lexical root of *khāla* (*kh-w-l*) is directly related to *kh-y-l*, the root of the word ‘Imagination’ (*khayāl*). By virtue of this lexical inter-reference, ‘the maternal aunt’ is an allusion to the domain of the creative Imagination: in this case the way

⁴³ On these four types of love (*ḥubb*, *wadd*, *hawā* and ‘*ishq*) see Gloton’s full translation of the *Dhakhā‘ir* (Ibn ‘Arabī 1996a, pp. 60–61), the most valuable available version of the text.

⁴⁴ *Yā bint al-khāla(h)* = [1 + 1 = 2] + [2 + 5 + 4 = 11] + [1 + 3 / + 6 + 1 + 3 + 5 = 19] = 5, value of the letter *hā*’ of the *huwīyya* - as in the calculation of *khāla(t)*, counting *tā*’ = 14 = 5—which, according to ode 41 (Ibn ‘Arabī [1955] 2003, p. 161) is the only object of the poet’s search. On other numerical values of this expression and the polyvalence of its symbolism, see Beneito (2022, *sub voce*).

the poet addresses that presence would mean ‘daughter of the Imaginal realm’, precisely because she is an epiphany in the presence of active Imagination or even the eye/entity of Imagination itself.

In this sense, we have to remember that Islamic tradition calls the Palm Tree ‘Adam’s sister’ because *she* was created with the leftover clay from his creation, and she is thus the aunt of humanity. From the leftover clay from the creation of the Palm Tree, the Vast Earth of Reality or Imaginal World was then created (Beneito 2001, pp. 88–91). Thus ‘maternal cousin’ comes to mean—since implicitly the Palm Tree (as well as the Earth of Imagination) is also Eve’s sister and, therefore, aunt in the maternal line (*khāla*)—‘daughter of the Palm’ or ‘daughter of the Imaginal World’.

3. Qurrat al-‘Ayn according to Bosnevi: The Perfect Mirror of Muhammadian Sainthood

I did not find previously any relevant commentary on Qurrat al-‘Ayn in any other work or study, but recently, working on Bosnevi’s book *Qurrat ‘ayn al-shuhūd wa-mir’āt ‘arā’is ma‘ānī al-ghayb wa-l-jūd*—which includes a commentary on Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Tā’iyya*—(Bosnevi 2015) together with Stephen Hirtenstein, we came across and translated possibly the most significant passages ever written on the figure of Qurrat al-‘Ayn that inspires the very title of his book. Although we treat the matter more extensively in our forthcoming book *Patterns of contemplation*, it seems necessary to mention here some references that are particularly meaningful in the context of this article. In his introduction, Bosnevi (d. 1644 CE) places particular emphasis on attributing his inspiration to the same source as Ibn ‘Arabī, namely Qurrat al-‘Ayn (Bosnevi 2015, pp. 86–87).

For him, the Maiden is ‘the image of the Muhammadian Sainthood and the all-inclusiveness of the divine Names, who is disclosed in the places of manifestation of the perfect ones among the people of Rūm’, or in other words, she is ‘the place of disclosure (*maḥall*) of the divine sciences and the sublime spiritual places of contemplation’. Thus, Ibn ‘Arabī, according to Bosnevi’s words, ‘contemplated in her mirror the form of Muhammadian Sainthood and the form of the divine sciences which he reflected in his own writings . . . ’ (Bosnevi 2015, p. 86).

Later on, Bosnevi explains more about the very important principle of ‘the Complete Mirror’ (*al-mir’āt al-tāmma*), the ultimate nature of Qurrat al-‘Ayn, saying that ‘the order of revelation (*tajallī*) never ceases to manifest [. . .] to the universal mission of Muhammad and the total unitive form, which is the Complete Mirror [that is] in total correspondence to the divine Form and the essential Unity of Uniqueness’ (Bosnevi 2015, p. 55). As we can observe in his text, he is not considering any other approach to Qurrat al-‘Ayn: she is the Perfect Mirror of the divine disclosure. Note that, significantly, in the previous passage the consonantal writing of the word ‘mirror’ (*mir’ā*)—a feminine term—is in Arabic exactly the same (with the only variation of an auxiliary *mādda* on the *alif* instead of a *hamza*) as the word ‘woman’ (*mar’a*), which seems to be an implicit allusion in this passage: Qurrat al-‘Ayn would be, from this perspective, both the Complete Mirror (المرآة التامة) and the Complete Woman (المرأة التامة) as a female expression of perfect receptivity, in correspondence with Ibn ‘Arabī’s conception in the *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (Ibn ‘Arabī 1946, p. 217), according to which contemplating God in women constitutes the most perfect contemplation.

Bosnevi interprets the name of the Maiden as ‘the sign of her appearance’ and he explains that ‘Qurrat al-‘Ayn’ has a numerical value of 1030 (100 + 200 + 200 + 400 + 70 + 10 + 50, without counting the article), which was precisely the date of the first draft (*taswīd*) of his commentary (Bosnevi 2015, p. 55), i.e., the culmination of the period of inspiration of this writing.

Showing his familiarity with arithmosophy and the imaginal transparency of figures when reading Ibn ‘Arabī, he adds that the year 1031 is the numerical value of the ‘sign of her manifestation’, the word *khāla(t)* we have seen referring to Qurrat al-‘Ayn’s ‘maternal aunt’, which he counts as 600 + 1 + 30 + 400 explaining that the resulting number 1031 is precisely the date of the completion and writing-out (*tabyīd*) of his own treatise. And

he adds, ‘It is because of this correspondence (*munāsaba*) [of the two signs and the two dates] that I have entitled it with her name [Qurrat al-‘Ayn] . . . ’ (Bosnevi 2015, p. 87). In a sense, through these detailed explanations Bosnavi seems to suggest that his book—which includes the composition of his own *tā’iyya* (a poem rhyming in *tā’* as the other longer one he extensively comments in this work)—is directly connected to the inspiration of the Maiden.

4. Conclusions

With Bosnevi’s significant testimony on her condition of perfect mirror of the divine form, we conclude that Qurrat al-‘Ayn is an imaginal presence, a themenophany of the Ka‘ba in the image of al-Niẓām, a cosmophany of the Universal Complete Mirror in Ibn ‘Arabī’s heart. As the matrix of the *Tarjumān* she is also a poemophany (in the form of the four verses) and she can even be seen as a bibliophany in the form of the *Tarjumān*’s collection of odes.

We have shown that the kaleidoscopic structure of the *Tarjumān* corresponds, on the one hand, to the symbolism of the Ka‘ba, where the numbers 4, 6, and 7 are particularly important in relation to its conception and its correlation with the values and meanings of the Arabic letters ‘*ayn* and ‘*ṣād*, as circular/spherical expressions, and on the other hand, to the symbolism of Arabic geomancy, understood as the spiritual science of interpreting the Imaginal Earth.

Through the article, which is also a reflection on Ibn ‘Arabī’s hermeneutical procedures applied to his own writing, the symbolic significance of the dates, or the number of verses of the poems, or their prosody, or the numerical value of their rhymes, or lexical inter-reference among words, among other features, has also been emphasized, showing that a text by the author can’t be wholly understood without taking into account all the keys that he uses himself in his hermeneutic treatment of scriptural or traditional texts. Studying these procedures in his writings is also fundamental in order to understand later key authors from all Islamic lands and periods, such as the Andalusian Ibn Sab‘īn al-Riḳūfī, the Emir ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jazā‘irī or ‘Abd al-Ghanī al-Nābulusī from Damascus, just to mention some examples among hundreds of main Sufi figures inspired by Ibn ‘Arabī’s teachings until our own time.

This article will soon be followed, as a continuation, by another one entitled ‘The emissaries to the Ka‘ba: on the structure of Ibn ‘Arabī’s *Tāj al-rasā’il*’, exploring again—from new texts and perspectives—main terms studied here, such as *qurrat al-‘ayn* or *jāriya*, as well as other epiphany figures of spiritual mediation, such as the *Fatā* or ‘the emissaries of the Names servants’ (rusul ‘abīd al-asmā’, Ibn ‘Arabī 2018a, p. 251), mainly in the *Dīwān al-ma‘ārif* (also known as *al-Dīwān al-kabīr*) and two other major works by Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya* and *Tāj al-rasā’il*, whose respective structures and modalities of inspiration will be considered from similar perspectives to what we have presented here with regard to the *Tarjumān*.

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