Planets in Alchemy: Commentaries and Glosses on the Opening Verses of Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s’s *Shudhūr al-dhahab**

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Abstract

The Arabic alchemical poetry collection *Shudhūr al-dhahab* (“The Splinters of Gold”) by Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s (fl. 12th and/or 13th c.) has engendered a remarkably rich commentary tradition, both in separate works and in manuscript glosses, written and copied from the 12th/13th to the 20th centuries. Of particular interest to the commentators was the first poem of the collection. It was known as *al-Kawkabīyya* (“The Planetary Poem”) since the seven classical planets are the principal agents in its two opening verses. After providing a survey of all known commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab* and of the poetry collection’s manuscripts with glosses on the “planetary” verses, this article analyses their explanations, particularly with regard to the interrelations of astrological and alchemical imagery. It also includes an edition of an alchemical poem of unclear authorship, which was probably composed as an imitation of the first poem of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* by emulating its references to the planets.

Keywords: Arabic alchemy – Arabic astrology – Arabic manuscripts – commentaries – glosses – alchemical poetry

1 Introduction

In the year of 1439, Timurid sultan Ulugh Beg (d. 853/1449), who was famous for his profound interest in astronomy,¹ had a volume with three works by the alchemist Aydamir al-Jildakī (fl. mid-14th c.) copied for his library.² Of these three, two are commentaries on the alchemical poetry collection *Shudhūr al-dhahab* (“The Splinters of Gold”) by Abū l-Ḥasan

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¹ MANZ 2000: 812–813.

² MS Istanbul, Topkapı Sarayı Kütüphanesi, Ahmet III, 2111, dated 843/1439. This MS was copied in Herat for the library of Ulugh Beg, according to a declaration on the title page, carefully executed with golden, white, green and blue ink (*bi-rasm khizānat al-sulṭān* [...] *Ulugh Bīk Bahādir Kūrkān*).

‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Andalusī, known as Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s, a comprehensive *dīwān* of around 1400 verses in 43 alphabetically ordered poems.³ The commentaries are entitled *Maṭālī‘ al-budūr* (“The Places of Rising of the Full Moons”) and *al-Durr al-manthūr* (“The Scattered Pearls”), respectively both *fī sharḥ ṣadr dīwān al-Shudhūr* (“on the Explanation of the Opening of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters [of Gold]’”). Both commentaries exclusively discuss the first poem of the collection. It is not surprising that Ulugh Beg as an astronomer took a particular interest in this four-versed poem since the seven classical planets, including the Sun and the Moon, play a prominent role in its two opening verses. Therefore, this poem on *hamza* in the metre *ṭawīl* was also known as *al-Kawkabīyya* (“The Planetary Poem”):⁴

١	إِذَا ثَلَّثَ الْمَرْيَحَ بِالزُّهْرَةِ امْرُؤٌ	وَقَارَنَ بِالْبَدْرِ الْمُنِيرِ دُكَاءٌ
٢	وَوَاصَلَ سَعْدَ الْمُشْتَرِي بِعُطَارِدٍ	إِلَى زُحَلٍ كِي يَسْتَفِيدَ ضِيَاءٌ
٣	وَأَجْمَدَ أَذْهَانًا وَحَلَّ بِحِكْمَةٍ	صُخُورًا أَصَارَتْهَا الْمِيَاهُ هَبَاءٌ
٤	فَذَاكَ الَّذِي إِنْ يُصَحَّ أَفْقَرُ مُعْتَدٍ	يُرْخُ وَهُوَ أَغْنَى الْعَالَمِينَ مَسَاءٌ ^٥

1. If one lets Mars form a trine with Venus,
And the Sun conjoin the shining Full Moon,
2. And unites benefic Jupiter with Mercury
Towards Saturn, so that it may gain brightness,
3. And solidifies oils and liquefies with wisdom
Rocks that waters have turned into dust,
4. He will be, even if he was very poor in the morning,
The richest of the worlds in the evening.⁶

The two opening verses on the planets are probably the most famous ones of the entire collection, since they have been commented upon more frequently than any other verse of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*. In his commentary, the alchemist Abū l-Qāsim al-Sīmāwī (fl. mid-13th

³ There are two critical editions of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, by GHAZZALI (2018, based on 6 MSS) and by DOLGUSHEVA (forthcoming, based on 95 MSS). On the alchemist Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s and his work, see FORSTER/MÜLLER 2020b. Along with the two commentaries on *Shudhūr*, the MS from Ulugh Beg’s library contains al-Jildakī’s *Natā’ij al-fikar fī l-kashf ‘an aḥwāl al-ḥajar* (“The Results of the Thoughts on the Revelation of the States of the Stone”) and a praise poem for Ulugh Beg.

⁴ This title is given in several MSS of *Shudhūr*: Baghdad, Dār al-makhtūtāt al-‘Irāqīyya, 2-30654, fol. 53r; Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-Miṣriyya, 177, fol. 1v, (dated 997/1588-9); Cairo, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, 5926, fol. 27v; Kabul, Ārshīf-i millī-i Afghānistān, 167 (copied in Kashmir in 1010/1601-2, not foliated); Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 2840, fol. 1v; Rabat, al-Khizāna al-Ḥasaniyya, 1369, fol. 1v (dated 1301/1883-4); Riyadh, King Abdulaziz Public Library, 681, p. 2 (dated 1057/1647-8) and Riyadh, King Saud University Library, 3571, fol. 1v (ca. 16th c.). The metre of the poem has been identified by FORSTER 2020a: 41.

⁵ Ed. DOLGUSHEVA (forthcoming). Cf. also ed. GHAZZALI 2018: 93.

⁶ My translation is based on FORSTER 2020a: 41, with some modifications.

c.) emphasises that the stylistic skill and uniqueness of these verses stem from the fact that they contain the names of all seven planets.⁷ Similarly, al-Jildakī comments in *al-Durr al-manthūr* that in these two verses, Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs has dealt thoroughly with the seven planets and their interrelations.⁸ As for their alchemical content, the commentary tradition highlights the importance of the first verses within the poetry collection. In *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr*, al-Jildakī writes referring to Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs: “I looked into his book *Shudhūr al-dhahab* and I found that he had contained the entire wisdom one aspires to (*jamīʿ al-ḥikma al-maṭlūba*) [...] in the verses on *alif* that he put at its beginning.”⁹ According to the anonymous author of a previous commentary called *al-Dāʿira al-hindiyya* (“The Indian Circle”), the remaining verses of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* are nothing but an explanation (*sharḥ*) of its first verses.¹⁰ This resonates with a metaphor in al-Jildakī’s commentary *al-Badr al-munīr fī maʿrifat asrār al-iksīr* (“The Shining Full Moon on the Knowledge of the Secrets of the Elixir”), where he mentions that his disciples or alchemist colleagues (*talaba zamāninā* – lit. “students of our time”) consider the first three verses of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* the “fruit of the poetry collection” (*thamarat al-dīwān*) and all remaining verses the “peel surrounding it” (*qushūr ʿalayhā*).¹¹ In *al-Durr al-manthūr*, al-Jildakī states that a competent (*ḥādhiq*) alchemist would only need these verses of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* and could do without the rest of the *dīwān* in theory and practice.¹² Similarly, the copyist of a Hyderabad manuscript of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* informs his readers that Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs has indicated in a succinct and concise way “all methods and techniques of the Art [of alchemy]” (*jamīʿ ṭuruq al-ṣanʿa wa-anḥāʾuhā*) in the opening of the poetry collection, for which the remaining poems serve only as supporting evidence (*shawāhid*).¹³ The alchemist ʿAlī Bek al-Iznīqī comments that, in his two opening verses, Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs has pointed out the entire “science of the stone” (*ʿilm al-ḥajar*) and the “science of the balance” (*ʿilm al-mīzān*) likewise.¹⁴

There is an alchemical poem of unclear authorship, which shows strong parallels to the first poem of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* as it also focuses on the planets in four verses on *hamza* in *ṭawīl*, while applying a similar syntactic and semantic structure. It has been attributed to Khālīd b. Yazīd (d. 85/704) in some manuscripts, where it is copied together with poetry of

7 MS Mashhad, Kitābkhāna-yi markazī-yi Āstān-i quds-i Raḍawī, 5767, fol. 12r.

8 MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 44v. The presence of the names of the planets in the beginning of *Shudhūr* has also led manuscript cataloguers to erroneously classify the work as an astronomical text. See for example the catalogue of the Tunisian National Library (DĀR AL-KUTUB AL-WAṬANIYYA AL-TŪNISIYYA 1978–1981, IV: 129), where *Shudhūr al-dhahab* in MS 4644 is identified as a “treatise in verse on astronomy” (*manẓūma fī l-falak*). Al-Jildakī’s commentary *al-Durr al-manthūr* was also classified as an astronomical work in a Meccan library, as can be seen in the manuscript’s shelfmark: MS Mecca, Maktabat Makka al-mukarrama, Falak 21. In the library’s catalogue, the title of the text is incorrectly given as *Maṭāliʿ al-budūr* (cf. ṬARĀBULSĪ 1997: 502).

9 MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 85v.

10 MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 128, fol. 1v.

11 MS Tehran, Kitābkhāna-yi Majlis-i shūrā-yi millī, 12606, p. 212.

12 MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 70v.

13 MS Hyderabad, Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Institute, Kīmīyāʾ 56, p. 2.

14 MS Paris, Bibliothèque nationale de France, Arabe 2624, fol. 1v.

his,¹⁵ while another manuscript ascribes it to al-Ṭughrāʾī (d. 515/1121).¹⁶ An anonymous commentator, however, states: “Some learned men composed [these verses] on *hamza*, imitating the author of *Shudhūr*.¹⁷ This would indicate that the poem was written after *Shudhūr al-dhahab* and, thus, neither by Khālīd, nor by al-Ṭughrāʾī.¹⁸ I propose the following text and translation of the poem, based on the copy from Hamburg¹⁹ as reference manuscript:

١	إِذَا زُحِّلَ أَحْرَقْتَهُ بَعْدَ سَبْعَةٍ	وَكَلَّسْتَهُ حَتَّى يَصِيرَ هَبَاءً
٢	وَزَوَّجْتَ بِالْمَرْخِ شَمْسًا وَزُهْرَةً	كَقِسْمَةِ مِيرَاثِ النِّسَاءِ سَوَاءً
٣	وَأَوْدَعْتَ أَصْبَاعَ الْجُسُومِ عُطَارِدًا	لِقَوْمٍ أَقَامُوا لِلثُّبُوتِ لَوَاءً
٤	وَالْحَقَّتْهُ الْبَدْرُ الْمُنِيرُ أَقْمَتَهُ	وَفَزَتْ وَأُعْطِيَتْ الْعَدَاةُ غَنَاءً ²⁰

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1. If you burn Saturn after seven,
And calcinate it until it turns into dust,
2. And marry Sun and Venus to Mars,
Equally, like the share of women's heritage,
3. And entrust the bodies' dyes to Mercury,
For a people that set up a banner for constancy,
4. And attain it as the shining Full Moon, you have resurrected it,
You were successful and are given wealth in the morning.

¹⁵ MSS Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, Or. 255, fol. 18r (copied ca. 15th c.); Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Kīmiyā' 107, p. 103 (copied 1312/1894-5); Mecca, Umm al-Qurā University, 237, p. 30; Paris, BnF, Ar. 6281, fol. 10v (copied ca. 18th/19th c.); cf. DAPSENS 2021: 354. I wish to thank Marion Dapsens for informing me about these MSS and sharing their copies with me.

¹⁶ MS Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Or. 310, fols. 80v–81r (copied 993-4/1585-6). This MS was written in Istanbul and contains different, mainly Turkish, texts on alchemy.

¹⁷ MS St Petersburg, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, 1067, fol. 27r (*qāla ba'd al-fudalā' mudāhiyan li-ṣāhib al-Shudhūr fī l-hamza*).

¹⁸ I have not been able to find the poem in MSS with alchemical poetry by al-Ṭughrāʾī, nor any hints that would indicate that the lifetime of Ibn Arfa' Ra's would have been prior to that of al-Ṭughrāʾī. Cf. FORSTER/MÜLLER 2020b: 396.

¹⁹ Cf. note 16.

²⁰ Critical apparatus: MSS Beirut (ب), Cairo (ق), Hamburg (هـ), Mecca (م), Paris (ر), St Petersburg (س)

١ احرقته : دبرته، ر || وكلسته : وبيضته، ر || يصير : يعود، ب س ق م ٢ [وزوجت] : وزاوجت، ب س ق م : وزوجته، ر : وزوج، ه || بالمرخ : المرخ، ر س || شمسا وزهرة : تم زهرة، ر || كقسمة : قسمة، م || ميراث : ميزان، ب || النساء : السنين، ب : الاناث، ر : البنين، ق م ٣ واودعت : وزوجته، ر : واودع، س || عطاردا، ب س ق : عطارد، ر م ه || لقوم : يقوم، ب : كقوم، ر || للثبات : للثبات، ب : للثبات، ر ٤ والحقته : والحقته، س : والحقته، ق م || البدر : جسد، س || أقمته : قمنه، ب : اقامها، ر || وفزت ... غناء : وصرت غنيا في الزمان دهاء، ر : -، س.

Within the transmission history of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, the third verse of this poem has been added to the “Planetary Poem” of Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s’s poetry collection in a number of manuscripts, making it a five-versed poem. However, it was changed into the third person (*wa-awda’a* instead of *wa-awda’ta*), in order to fit the syntax of the opening poem of *Shudhūr*. It appears in different positions of the poem, either after the second, the third or the fourth verse.²¹ This insertion must have happened at the beginning of the 14th century or earlier, according to the date of the oldest known manuscript that includes it.²² In a 16th-century copy of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, the verse has been added in the margin, with a note ascribing it to Khālīd b. Yazīd.²³ In some of the manuscripts of this poem, where it is copied among poetry by Khālīd, the poem is introduced with the information that “the author of ‘The Splinters’ took from it.”²⁴ Obviously, someone who knew a five-versed version of the first poem of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* had concluded that Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s himself had plagiarized the verse from “Khālīd’s” poem. This is unlikely, however, since the verse does not appear in Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s’s auto-commentary on *Shudhūr al-dhahab*. Further, its appearance in different positions of the poem indicates that it was not part of the original text. With regard to the stylistic conception of Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s’s opening poem, al-Sīmāwī explained that it was meant to contain the names of the seven planets. Therefore, it would seem incoherent to add another verse on Mercury, as this planet is already present in the second verse. Compared to the “Planetary Poem” of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, the poem ascribed to Khālīd appears less elaborate, since it does not include all planets, with Jupiter missing. It seems likely that the statement of the St Petersburg manuscript is true and that this poem has been composed as an literary imitation of the famous opening poem of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*. The similarity of both poems then probably inspired an anonymous editor to add the third verse of the imitation poem to the original poem of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*. Imitations of Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s’s poetry collection were not uncommon, as al-Jildakī knew not only “many commentaries” (*shurūḥ kathīra*) and “pentastichic poems” (*takhmīsāt*) on *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, but also “imitations” (*muḍāḥāt*) of its poetry.²⁵ Apart from *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s’s “Stanzaic Poem on the Art [of Alchemy]” (*Muwashshaḥ ṣanʿawī*) has also served as a model for at least one anonymous imitation poem.²⁶

²¹ Cf. ed. DOLGUSHEVA (forthcoming).

²² MS Tinduf, Zāwiyat Sīdī Belʿamaš, 31 (dated 704/1304), cf. ed. DOLGUSHEVA (forthcoming).

²³ MS Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, 1295, fol. 1v (dated 926/1519-20): *tabayyana annahū min kalām Khālīd*. I wish to thank Svetlana Dolgusheva for this information.

²⁴ MS Beirut, Université Saint-Joseph, Or. 255, fol. 18r (ca. 15th c.): *min hādhiḥi l-maqṭūʿa akhadha ṣāḥib al-Shudhūr*. MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Kīmiyāʾ 107, p. 103 (copied 1312/1894-5) and Mecca, Umm al-Qurā 237, p. 30: *wa-qāla ayḍan hādhiḥi l-qaṣīda [...]* *wa-minhā akhadha ṣāḥib al-Shudhūr*.

²⁵ MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 63v.

²⁶ See FORSTER 2021: 653. On the concept of literary imitation (*muʿāraḍa*) in Arabic poetry, see SCHIPPERS 1992: 261.

2 Commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab*

The meaning of the verses of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* must have been rather obscure to their readership, such that various alchemists felt compelled to compose explanatory commentaries on them. It appears that Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs was aware of the difficulty of his poetry, since he himself commented upon his *ḏīwān* in a dialogue with his disciple Abū l-Qāsim.²⁷ In total, there are thirteen known commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, of which twelve are extant in manuscripts and not less than five have been written by al-Jildakī.²⁸ It seems that commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab* were mainly, if not exclusively, composed in the Islamic East. We have information on certain commentaries having been written in Alexandria, Baghdad and Cairo, but no hints at any with Maghrebi origins. The commentaries were written between the 12th/13th and 15th centuries and manuscript evidence suggests that their reception in different parts of the Islamic world, from India to Morocco, continued until the late 19th century. Short versions (*mukhtaṣarāt*) of several commentaries, redacted by later editors, were also in circulation.²⁹ It is noteworthy that the commentaries differ in the selection of verses they comment on. While some discuss the entire poetry collection, most of them only choose to explain certain poems and verses, showing different degrees of selectivity. Almost half of the thirteen extant commentaries are dedicated exclusively to the first poem. The two opening verses on the planets which constitute the focus of this article, are explained in eleven commentaries, of which ten were available for analysis in manuscript sources. The following table shows the commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab* in a mostly chronological order.

Table 1: *Commentaries on Shudhūr al-dhahab*

	Author	Title	Time / Place	Comments on	Number of known MSS ³⁰	Short version(s) ³¹
1	Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs, ʿAlī b. Mūsā al-Andalusī	<i>Ḥall mushkilāt al-Shudhūr</i> “The Unraveling of the Difficult Verses of ‘The Splinters’” ³²	12 th or 13 th c., Alexandria (?)	most poems, selected verses	27 (31)	+

²⁷ See Müller in IBN ARFAʿ RAʿS (forthcoming).

²⁸ On the life and works of al-Jildakī, see FORSTER/MÜLLER 2020a: 92–93, HARRIS 2017: 531–556, and ULLMANN 1972: 237–242.

²⁹ Of those, one short version of Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs’s auto-commentary has been printed as a lithograph in late 19th-century India (Mumbai 1298/1888), cf. Müller in IBN ARFAʿ RAʿS (forthcoming).

³⁰ The numbers in parentheses include MSS which I have not seen, but which are indicated in manuscript catalogues. For detailed lists of all MSS, see FORSTER 2020b and 2020c.

³¹ For detailed lists of short versions and their MSS, see FORSTER 2020b and 2020c. On short versions of *Ḥall*, see Müller in IBN ARFAʿ RAʿS (forthcoming).

³² Reference text: ed. Müller: IBN ARFAʿ RAʿS (forthcoming). For further information on this commentary and its author, see the introduction of the edition.

2	Rukn al-Dīn Aḥmad b. Qaraṭāyā al-Irbilī	[<i>Sharḥ dīwān al-shaykh</i> [...] ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Andalusī al-Anṣārī’] [“Commentary on the Poetry Collection of the Master [...] ‘Alī b. Mūsā al-Andalusī al-Anṣārī’”] ³³	between 635/1237 and 655/1257, Baghdad	all poems, all verses (?) ³⁴	6	+
3	al-Sīmāwī, Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-‘Irāqī	<i>al-Durr al-manthūr fī sharḥ al-Shudhūr</i> “The Scattered Pearls: Commentary on ‘The Splinters’” or <i>Sharḥ dīwān Shudhūr al-dhahab</i> “Commentary on the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters of Gold’” ³⁵	mid-13 th c.?	most poems, selected verses	9 (17)	+
4	Anonymous	<i>Sharḥ abyāt al-ma‘ānī li-dīwān Shudhūr al-dhahab</i> “Commentary on the Verses of Allegorical Expressions of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters of Gold’” ³⁶	before 706/1306	most poems, selected verses	3 (4)	–

³³ Reference text: MS Tehran, Majlis, Sinā 1562. The title of this commentary is only given by the copyist, who has added an introduction to the text. In the other MSS, the commentary itself does not have a specific title neither. On the author al-Irbilī (d. 655/1257), see IBN AL-SHA‘ĀR AL-MAWṢILĪ 2005, I: 268–9, and al-SĀFADĪ 1969, VII: 296. For further information on the commentary, see the introduction in MS Tehran, Majlis, 1562, Sinā, pp. 1–2.

³⁴ The copyist states that al-Irbilī’s commentary had four parts, but that it was only transmitted until the part on the poems on *qād*. Indeed, in all extant MSS, the end of the text is lacking and in most MSS, the commentary ends after the poems on *qād*. Yet, it seems that it originally discussed all verses of *Shudhūr*.

³⁵ Reference text: MS Mashhad, Āstān-i quds-i Raḍawī, 5767. On the author, see ULLMANN 1972: 235–7. On the authenticity of this commentary, see FORSTER/MÜLLER 2020b: 377–379, and Müller in IBN ARFA‘ RA’S (forthcoming). In the reference MS, the title is given as *Sharḥ dīwān Shudhūr al-dhahab* in the illuminated headpiece, and as *al-Durr al-manthūr fī Sharḥ al-Shudhūr* in the colophon (with *الدر* being erroneously written *الدر*). It seems that the latter was the original title of al-Sīmāwī’s commentary, but there is also another anonymous commentary on *Shudhūr* associated with the same title (no. 5 of this list), as well as a later commentary by al-Jildakī (no. 9). Al-Jildakī might have copied this title from al-Sīmāwī, since he knew his commentary under this title, as he writes in *Ghāyat al-surūr* about “the commentary on this poetry collection by the author of *al-Muktasab*, which is called ‘The Scattered Pearls’” (*sharḥ ṣāhib al-Muktasab li-hādhā l-dīwān al-musammā bi-l-Durr al-manthūr*), MS Leipzig, Universitätsbibliothek, 836, fol. 31r (this sentence is not extant in MS Leiden, Universitätsbibliothek, Or. 118). Shaban Salim (Cairo) is preparing a critical edition of al-Sīmāwī’s commentary.

³⁶ Reference text: MS London, British Library, Add 22756 (dated 706/1306). This commentary is related to al-Sīmāwī’s commentary, for both texts are identical in their discussion of certain poems of *Shudhūr*, i.e. from the poem on *dhāl* until poem on *ṣād*, and from the first poem on *fā’* until the end of *Shudhūr*. Further research is needed in order to determine whether al-Sīmāwī has copied these texts from the author

5	Anonymous	<i>al-Dā'ira al-hindiyya</i> “The Indian Circle” or <i>al-Durr al-manthūr fī sharḥ ṣadr dīwān al-Shudhūr</i> “The Scattered Pearls: Commentary on the Opening of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters’” ³⁷	before 737/1337, before al- Jildakī	first poem	1	–
6	al-Jildakī, ‘Izz al-Dīn Aydāmī b. ‘Alī	<i>Maṭālī‘ al-budūr fī sharḥ ṣadr dīwān al-Shudhūr</i> “The Places of Rising of the Full Moons: Commentary on the Opening of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters’” ³⁸	before 737/1337, Cairo	first poem	18 (30)	+
7	al-Jildakī, ‘Izz al-Dīn Aydāmī b. ‘Alī	<i>al-Badr al-munīr fī ma‘rifat asrār al-iksīr</i> “The Shining Full Moon on the Knowledge of the Secrets of the Elixir” ³⁹	before 737/1337, Cairo	41 st poem, ninth verse	16 (19)	–

of this commentary, or vice-versa.

³⁷ Reference text: MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 128. The title of this commentary is unclear. In the only known MS, it is called *Kitāb al-Dā'ira al-hindiyya* (“The Indian Circle”) on the title page and in the beginning of the text written by the copyist (*hādḥā al-kitāb al-mawsūm bi-l-Dā'ira al-hindiyya*, fol. 1v), whereas within the introduction on the same folio, the author declares: “I called it ‘The Scattered Pearls: Commentary on the Opening of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters’” (*wa-sammaytuhā al-Durr al-manthūr fī sharḥ ṣadr dīwān al-Shudhūr*). In the colophon, there is a combination of both titles: *al-Dā'ira al-mawsūma bi-l-Durr al-manthūr fī sharḥ ṣadr dīwān al-Shudhūr* (fol. 7v). Al-Jildakī knew this commentary and cites it in *Maṭālī‘ al-budūr* as *al-Dā'ira al-hindiyya al-mawsūma bi-l-Durr al-manthūr fī sharḥ ṣadr abyāt al-Shudhūr* (MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 99r; cf. note 173). In his later work *Natā'ij al-fikar*, al-Jildakī cites the author of the commentary as *ṣāḥib al-Dā'ira al-hindiyya fī sharḥ ṣadr Shudhūr al-dhahab* (MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 30r).

³⁸ Reference text: MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fols. 85v–102v, cf. note 2. The colophon states that this MS was copied from an autograph of the author al-Jildakī (*wa-kutibat [...] min nuskhā kutibat min khaṭṭ al-muṣannif*, fol. 102v). This is the earliest commentary on *Shudhūr* by al-Jildakī. In later MSS, it became also known under the title *Qalā'id al-nuḥūr* (“The Necklaces (or: Exquisite Poems) of the Upper Chests”). It seems that al-Jildakī composed this commentary when he was still a disciple, since there is a note referring to his teacher at the end of the text in one of the MSS: “When I finished this commentary, I informed my master and teacher in this art, Abū l-Qāsim Aḥmad b. Shaykh al-Islām al-Ṭūlūnī, about it. He examined it and told me: You have elucidated the secret and almost even unveiled it [...]” (MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye Kütüphanesi, Hacı Mahmud Efendi, 6225, fol. 158r).

³⁹ This commentary does not contain explanations on the ‘planetary’ opening verses. It is al-Jildakī’s second commentary on *Shudhūr*. In the introduction, he mentions that he already wrote a commentary on the beginning of *Shudhūr* entitled *Maṭālī‘ al-budūr* (MS Tehran, Majlis, 12606, p. 212).

8	al-Jildakī, ‘Izz al-Dīn Aydāmīr b. ‘Alī	<i>Kashf al-sutūr fī sharḥ dīwān al-Shudhūr</i> “The Uncovering of the Veils: Commentary on the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters’” ⁴⁰	before 742/1342	first poem	—	—
9	al-Jildakī, ‘Izz al-Dīn Aydāmīr b. ‘Alī	<i>al-Durr al-manthūr fī sharḥ ṣadr dīwān al-Shudhūr</i> “The Scattered Pearls: Commentary on the Open- ing of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters’” ⁴¹	742– 3/1342, Cairo	first poem	15 (18)	—
10	al-Jildakī, ‘Izz al-Dīn Aydāmīr b. ‘Alī	<i>Ghāyat al-surūr fī sharḥ dīwān al-Shudhūr</i> “The Utmost Joy: Commentary on the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters’” ⁴²	after 742– 3/1342	all poems, all verses	73 (99)	+
11	‘Alī Bek al- Iznīqī (‘Alī Çelebī al- Şarūkhānī)	<i>Ṭawālī‘ al-budūr li-ṣadr dīwān al-Shudhūr</i> “The Risings of the Full Moons, for the Opening of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters’” ⁴³	9 th /15 th c.	first poem	7 (9)	+

⁴⁰ Of this commentary, no MSS are currently known. Its title is given by al-Jildakī in his commentary *al-Durr al-manthūr*, where he states that he had previously written two commentaries on the beginning of *Shudhūr*, the first being *Maṭālī‘ al-budūr* and the second *Kashf al-sutūr fī sharḥ dīwān al-Shudhūr* (MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 43v).

⁴¹ Reference text: MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fols. 43v–84v; cf. note 2. According to the colophon (fol. 84v), this MS was copied in Herat from the autograph, which was finished by al-Jildakī in Cairo in 743/1342. Al-Jildakī started writing this commentary in 742/1342, as he states in the introduction (fol. 44r). This is his fourth commentary on *Shudhūr*. As it bears exactly the same title as the anonymous *al-Dā‘ira al-hindīyya*, it seems very probable that al-Jildakī has taken it from there, or from al-Sīmāwī’s commentary (cf. notes 35 and 37).

⁴² Reference text: MS Leiden, Universiteitsbibliotheek, Or. 118, vol. 1. This is al-Jildakī’s most comprehensive commentary on *Shudhūr*. It is composed of four parts and comments on every single verse of Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s’s poetry collection. As the number of extant MSS indicates, this was the most popular and widespread of all known commentaries on *Shudhūr*. Although its date of composition is unknown, it seems that al-Jildakī wrote it after *al-Durr al-manthūr*, since he does not mention it in his former commentaries.

⁴³ Reference text: MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2624. The title of this commentary seems to be a reference to the earliest commentary by al-Jildakī, *Maṭālī‘ al-budūr*. On the author, who is also known as the “New Author” (*al-Mu‘allif al-jadīd*), see ULLMANN 1972: 242–244 and ARTUN 2013: 144–156.

12	Anonymous	[<i>Sharḥ baʿd al-abyāt al-mawjūda fī awwal dīwān Shudhūr al-dhahab</i>] [“Commentary on some Verses from the Beginning of the Poetry Collection ‘The Splinters of Gold’”] ⁴⁴	?	first poem	2	–
13	Anonymous	[<i>Risāla fī sharḥ al-Shudhūr</i>] [“Treatise on the Explanation of ‘The Splinters’”] ⁴⁵	?	forth poem, selected verses	1	–

The third verse of the above mentioned imitation poem of the first poem of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* has also entered the commentary tradition, where it is present in the anonymous *Sharḥ abyāt al-maʿānī* as the third verse of the first poem.⁴⁶ Furthermore, there is a short, untitled commentary, allegedly written by al-Jildakī, which is dedicated exclusively to this additional verse.⁴⁷ It states that the verse had been deliberately removed from the first poem of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*.⁴⁸ Although Aydamir al-Jildakī is named as the author of this commentary in the beginning of the text, his authorship is, for various reasons, improbable. First, al-Jildakī does not mention this commentary in his other works on alchemy, nor does he include this additional verse in any of his commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab*. Even if it were a late work of his, he would probably have referred to his previous commentaries, which is not the case here. Second, the author of the commentary cites al-Jildakī in the third

⁴⁴ Reference text: MS Istanbul, Süleymaniye, Bağdatlı Vehbi, 2254. The title has been added with a pencil by a later hand.

⁴⁵ This commentary does not contain explanations on the ‘planetary’ opening verses. It might be an excerpt from an unknown longer commentary, because in the only extant MS (Tehran, Majlis, Sinā 153), the text starts immediately with the explanation of verses from the fourth poem of *Shudhūr*, without any introduction or title. Iranian catalogues identify the author of this commentary as being either one Shaykh Aḥmad Aḥsāʾī or one Ḥusayn Baḥrānī (see, for example, DIRĀYATĪ 2010, VI: 789). This information is probably based on a table of contents which has been added at the beginning of this alchemical MS, apparently by a later hand, and where the commentary is listed as *Risāla li-l-Shaykh Aḥmad aw li-l-Sayyid Ḥasan* (or: *Ḥusayn*) *al-Baḥrānī fī sharḥ al-Shudhūr*. However, these names cannot be found next to the text of the commentary, which is located towards the end of the MS (pp. 219–225).

⁴⁶ MS London, British Library, Add 22756, fol. 3r (dated 706/1306-7). This is also the case in a later MS of the same commentary: Istanbul, Millet Kütüphanesi, Ali Emiri Arabi, 3205, fol. 3r (copied 1015/1606-7 in Rosetta).

⁴⁷ This commentary is extant only in MS Ray, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīm, 634, pp. 125–129.

⁴⁸ MS Ray, Shāh ‘Abd al-‘Azīm, 634, p. 125: “Know that in the beginning of the master’s [i.e. Ibn Arfaʾ Raʾs’s] poetry collection, there is a verse which alchemists (*ahl al-wuṣūl*) have hidden because it will lead to a quick result (*li-mā fīhī min natīja qarība*).” The commentary cites the third verse of the imitation poem with the variant *al-nujūm* (“the stars”) instead of *al-jusūm* (“the bodies”), which is also extant in several MSS of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*. Cf. ed. DOLGUSHEVA (forthcoming).

person.⁴⁹ And finally, the concise style of writing of this very short commentary does not match al-Jildakī's rather wordy style, which is especially evident in his later works.

3 Glosses on the opening verses in manuscripts of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*

Of the more than ninety known manuscripts of Ibn Arfa' Ra's's poetry collection *Shudhūr al-dhahab*,⁵⁰ about one quarter contains explanatory glosses on the two "planetary" opening verses of the first poem. They are written on the margins or between the lines. Several manuscripts also show a combination of marginal and interlinear glosses. The following table shows these manuscripts in, as far as possible, chronological order.

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Table 2: Manuscripts of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* with glosses on the two opening verses

	Manuscript	Copied in	Marginal glosses	Interlinear glosses
1	Manchester, John Rylands Library, 809	ca. 740-1/1350	+	+
2	Tehran, Kitābkhāna-yi markazī-yi Dānishgāh, 1205	846/1442-3	+	+
3	Istanbul, Topkapı Kütüphanesi, Ahmet III, 1718 ⁵¹	853/1449-50	—	+
4	Istanbul, Topkapı Kütüphanesi, Ahmet III, 2572	880/1475-6	+	+
5	Istanbul, Köprülü Kütüphanesi, Fazıl Ahmed Paşa, 1295	926/1519-20	+	—
6	Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-Miṣriyya, Ṭabī'a Ṭal'at 177	997/1588-9	+	+
7	Riyadh, King Saud University Library, 3571 ⁵²	ca. 16 th c.	+	—
8	Geneva, Bibliothèque de Genève, Ms. O. 33 ⁵³	1063/1652-3	+	—

⁴⁹ MS Ray, Shāh 'Abd al-'Azīm, 634, p. 126: "[...], like the master (*al-ustādh*) Aydamir al-Jildakī mentioned in his book 'The Lamp on the Secrets of the Science of the Key'."

⁵⁰ Cf. ed. DOLGUSHEVA (forthcoming).

⁵¹ The interlinear glosses of this manuscript are also present in MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2623, where they were copied separately without the poems of *Shudhūr* under the title *Hāshiya 'alā Shudhūr al-dhahab* in 1088/1677-8. However, the glosses of the Paris MS have not been copied directly from MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, but from another, apparently lost, copy of *Shudhūr* from 898/1493 (cf. MS Paris, BnF, Arabe 2623, fol. 1r).

⁵² This MS seems to be related to MS Cairo, Azhariyya, 5926, since both show the same set of glosses.

⁵³ This MS seems to be related to MS Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 881, since both show the same glosses.

9	Riyadh, King Saud University Library, 1716 ⁵⁴	before 1113/1701-2	+	+
10	Tehran, Kitābhāna-yi markazī-yi Dānishgāh, 7207	ca. 18 th c.	–	+
11	Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-Miṣriyya, Kīmiyā' wa-ṭabī'a 17	1204/1789-90	+	+
12	Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-Miṣriyya, 129	1206/1792, Herat	+	+
13	Rabat, al-Khizāna al-Ḥasaniyya, 2252	1232/1817	–	+
14	Rabat, al-Khizāna al-Ḥasaniyya, 1109	1303/1885-6	–	+
15	Hyderabad, Oriental Manuscripts Library and Research Institute, Kīmiyā' 56	1313/1895-6	+	+
16	Rabat, al-Khizāna al-Ḥasaniyya, 1116 ⁵⁵	late 19 th c., Cairo	+	+
17	Qom, al-Ma'had al-'ālī li-l-'ulūm wa-l-thaqāfa al- islāmiyya, 281	1345/1926-7	+	–
18	Baghdad, Dār al-makhtūṭāt al-'Iraqiyya, 2-30654	?	+	+
19	Cairo, Dār al-kutub al-Miṣriyya, Ṭabī'iyāt Taymūr 71	?	+	–
20	Cairo, al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya, 5926 ⁵⁶	?	+	–
21	Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, Ms. orient. A 1290	?	–	+
22	Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek, Cod. arab. 881	?	+	–
23	Oxford, Bodleian Library, Huntington 405	?	–	+
24	Rabat, Private collection	?	+	+
25	Tavşanlı, Zeytinoğlu İlçe Halk Kütüphanesi, 631 ⁵⁷	?	+	+

⁵⁴ The glosses of this MS seem to stem from different hands.

⁵⁵ In this MS, there are interlinear glosses in blue ink for grammatical explanations and in red ink for alchemical explanations. The MS was copied for the Moroccan sultan al-Ḥasan I by his scribe al-Sibā'ī. It seems that the glosses were written by al-Sibā'ī as well, since the red and blue inks seem to be identical to those used for the diacritics of the text and decoration of the MS. On al-Sibā'ī, cf. BRAUN/FORSTER 2021: 630.

⁵⁶ The glossist of this MS links his marginal notes to the text with small “footnote” numbers in red ink which he places over the words in the main text. A similar approach was used by the glossist of MS Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā' 56, in one marginal note, which he links to the word قُتِبَ with a spectacle-shaped symbol (cf. “Signes-de-renvoi” in GACEK 2009: 250–251). The glossist of MS Rabat, Private collection, used a different technique by linking marginal and interlinear glosses to their words of reference with connecting lines, which are sometimes also drawn across the text.

⁵⁷ This MS contains short interlinear glosses in Turkish and a marginal gloss in Arabic.

In some cases, the glossists have indicated the sources of their explanations, which are mostly commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, whose content they have cited or paraphrased. In other cases, glossists have copied explanations from the commentaries without indicating their source. The following table shows the citations I could identify. There may be more alchemical texts that served as unmarked sources for the glosses on these two verses.

Table 3: Citations from other works in glosses on the opening verses of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*

Source	Manuscript of <i>Shudhūr al-dhahab</i>	Indication of the source
Jābir b. Ḥayyān	Riyadh, KSU, 1716	+
Ibn Arfaʿ Ra's, <i>Ḥall mushkilāt al-Shudhūr</i>	Rabat, Private collection ⁵⁸	–
al-Sīmāwī, <i>al-Durr al-manthūr</i>	Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 1116	+
al-Jildakī, <i>Maṭāliʿ al-budūr</i>	Cairo, Azhariyya, 5926	–
	Riyadh, KSU, 3571	–
al-Jildakī, <i>al-Durr al-Manthūr</i>	Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2572	–
al-Jildakī, <i>Ghāyat al-surūr</i>	Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Kīmiyāʾ wa-ṭabīʿa 17	+
	Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 1116	+
	Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205	–
al-Jildakī, <i>al-Miṣbāḥ fī ʿilm al-miftāḥ</i>	Qom, Maʿhad, 281	+
al-Iznīqī, <i>Ṭawālīʿ al-budūr</i>	Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Kīmiyāʾ wa-ṭabīʿa 17	+ / –

4 Explanations of the two opening verses of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*

4.1 Verse 1

4.1.1 Mars (*al-mirrīkh*)

According to Ibn Arfaʿ Ra's, astrologers (*al-nujūmiyyūn* or *aṣḥāb al-nujūm*) consider the planet Mars, which is located in the fifth sphere (*falak*), as malefic, male, eastern (*mashriqī*), of fiery nature and red-yellow, dark colour, and as a blood shedding warrior (*muqātil saffāk al-dimāʾ*).⁵⁹ Likewise, al-Sīmāwī, the anonymous author of *Sharḥ abyāt* and al-Jildakī describe Mars as a red, hot, fiery, male planet.⁶⁰ In *Ghāyat al-surūr*, al-Jildakī also refers to

⁵⁸ In this MS, all glosses on the two first verses of *Shudhūr* are unmarked citations from Ibn Arfaʿ Ra's's *Ḥall*.

⁵⁹ IBN ARFAʿ RA'S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming. The indications of colour are cited from *Ḥall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Rabat, Private collection. Regarding the nature of Mars, Ibn Arfaʿ Ra's remarks that, in reality, planets have no natures (*ṭabāʾir*), since they are outside of the natural world. However, he adds, natures have been attributed to them in accordance with their effects.

⁶⁰ al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 6r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 3v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 87r. The author of *Sharḥ*

the localization of Mars in the fifth “heaven” (*samāʿ*) and adds more terms associated with this planet, like weapons (*silāḥ*), wars (*hurūb*) and violence (*qahr*).⁶¹

In alchemy, Mars is used as a metaphor for a substance (*jawhar*) that shares the characteristics of this planet, as explained by the commentators and glossists of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, most of whom describe it as hot-dry, male, and red.⁶² Al-Jildakī indicates that it is actually the hot-dry part of the alchemical stone (*ḥajar al-ṣanʿa*), being also known as the “fire of the stone” (*nār al-ḥajar*).⁶³ According to Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs, Mars in this verse represents the soul (*al-nafs*).⁶⁴ The anonymous author of *al-Dāʿira al-hindiyya* states that alchemists composed it out of the four natures and that it is only extant by means of preparation (*tadbīr*). Al-Jildakī has copied this information in two of his commentaries.⁶⁵ Like planet Mars, the alchemical substance is also associated with the east. Ibn Arfaʿ Raʿs calls it the “fighting, eastern mercury” (*al-zaybaq al-muqāṭil al-sharqī*) at the beginning of the preparation (*tadbīr*),⁶⁶ while other commentators name it the “eastern youth” (*al-fatā al-sharqī*),⁶⁷ and two glossists explain it merely as “the east” (*al-sharq*).⁶⁸ Another reference to the east might be the codename “Ostanes the Persian” (*Uṣṭānis al-Fārisī*) used by al-Jildakī.⁶⁹ Unlike most other commentators, al-Irbilī identifies Mars as iron (*ḥadīd*), and al-Jildakī explains in *Ghāyat al-surūr* that this is its identification among the metal bodies, because of its red colour.⁷⁰ Codenames for Mars include, among others, “leaven” (*khamīr(a)*),⁷¹ “crown of

abyāt and al-Jildakī describe it as hot-dry. The information of Mars being male is missing in *Sharḥ abyāt*.

⁶¹ al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 6. Like the commentators on *Shudhūr*, the astrologer Abū Maʿshar (d. 272/886) describes Mars as hot and fiery and associates it, among other things, with war, killing, fighting, and violence (YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, I: 806–809).

⁶² al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 6r; 8r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 3v (hot-dry substance); ANON., *Dāʿira*, fol. 2r (hot-dry, male substance); al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 88r (red, hot-dry substance); *Durr*, fol. 50v (hot-dry, male substance); *Ghāya*, p. 5: (red, hot substance); ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r, and glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Baghdad, Dār al-makhtūṭāt, 2/30654, fol. 53r, and Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyāʾ 56, p. 3 (hot-dry male substance). Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated) (the dry dye); Istanbul, Köprülü, Fazıl, 1295, fol. 1v, and Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2572, fol. 1v (male); Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v (the dry male).

⁶³ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 87r; *Durr*, fol. 49r; 51r; cf. *Ghāya*, p. 7, and a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Istanbul, Fazıl, 1295, fol. 1v. Al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālīʿ*, fols. 2r; 3r, calls it the “earth of the stone” (*arḍ al-ḥajar*; this is also cited in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 17, fol. 2v) and “the fire” (*al-nār*).

⁶⁴ IBN ARFAʿ RAʿS, *Hall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Hall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Rabat, Private collection.

⁶⁵ ANON., *Dāʿira*, fol. 2r/v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 88r; *Durr*, fol. 51r.

⁶⁶ IBN ARFAʿ RAʿS, *Hall*, forthcoming; cf. unmarked citation from *Hall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Rabat, Private collection.

⁶⁷ al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 6r; ANON., *Dāʿira*, fol. 2v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 87v, *Durr*, fol. 51r.

⁶⁸ Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Geneva, Bibliothèque, Ms. O. 33, fol. 2v; Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 881, fol. 2r.

⁶⁹ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 87v; *Durr*, fol. 51r; *Ghāya*, p. 7.

⁷⁰ al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, p. 11; al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 6f. The explanation of Mars as iron in Arabic alchemy has also been recorded by SIGGEL 1950: 88; 1951: 10–11; 51 and ULLMANN 1972: 267.

⁷¹ al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, p. 11; ANON., *Dāʿira*, fol. 2v.

victory” (*iklāl al-ghalaba*),⁷² “non-burning sulphur” (*al-kibrūt alladhī lā yaḥtariq*),⁷³ “shadowless copper” (*al-nuḥās alladhī lā ḡill lahū*),⁷⁴ and “Sun” (*shams*).⁷⁵

4.1.2 Venus (*al-zuh[a]ra*)

Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s’s commentary presents the meanings of Venus in astrology and in alchemy. He describes the planet as being located in the “fifth” sphere, counted downwards from above, i.e. from the sphere of the zodiac (*falak al-burūj*), as opposed to planet Mars, which is located in the fifth sphere, when counted upwards from the earth. In astrology, it is considered benefic and associated with pleasure, dance, and beauty. Its nature is cold-moist, it is female, western (*gharbiyya*), and of pure, shiny white colour.⁷⁶ In *Ghāyat al-surūr*, al-Jildakī counts the spheres upwards and indicates that Venus is located in the third “heaven” (*samā’*). He gives a similar astrological description of Venus as a white, bright planet, associated with women and girls, to which is attributed love, beauty, passion and joy.⁷⁷ Al-Sīmāwī states that planet Venus represents femininity, whiteness and moisture, and al-Iznīqī adds that the astrological house (*bayt*) of Venus is Libra (*al-mīzān*) and its exaltation (*sharaf*) in Pisces (*al-ḥūt*).⁷⁸

In alchemy, Venus refers to a substance that shares the characteristics of this planet. Most commentators describe it as cold-moist⁷⁹ and female.⁸⁰ According to al-Sīmāwī and al-Jildakī, it is white.⁸¹ It is also identified with water.⁸² Like Mars, this substance is said to be

⁷² al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli’*, fol. 87r; *Ghāya*, p. 7. Gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3.

⁷³ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli’*, fol. 87v.

⁷⁴ al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 51r

⁷⁵ ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 2v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli’*, fol. 87v; *Durr*, fol. 51r.

⁷⁶ IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming. Most of this information on Venus is cited from *Hall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Rabat, Private collection, without indication of the source.

⁷⁷ al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 7.

⁷⁸ al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 6r; al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī’*, fols. 5v; 6v. Within the astrological concept of houses (*buyūt*), each of Sun and Moon rule over one sign of the zodiac, while the remaining five planets rule over two signs each. Libra is the day-house of Venus. The exaltation (*sharaf*) of a planet is the sign in which it attains its highest astrological influence (HARTNER 1991: 85). The astrologer Abū Ma’shar also describes Venus as cold-moist and benefic, and associates it, among other things, with women, joy, dance, love, beauty, femininity, and passion (YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, I: 810–811).

⁷⁹ al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 6r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 3v; ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 2v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli’*, fol. 88v; *Durr*, fol. 54r; *Ghāya*, p. 7; ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r. Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Baghdad, Dār al-makḥṭūṭāt, 2-30654, fol. 53r; Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3; Istanbul, Köprülü, Fazıl, 1295, fol. 1v; Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v; Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v.

⁸⁰ al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 8r; ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 2v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli’*, fol. 88v; *Durr*, fol. 55r; *Ghāya*, p. 7; ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r. Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Baghdad, Dār al-makḥṭūṭāt, 2-30654, fol. 53r; Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3; Istanbul, Köprülü, Fazıl, 1295, fol. 1v; Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2572, fol. 1v.

⁸¹ al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 6r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli’*, fol. 88v.

⁸² al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 54v: “eternal water” (*al-mā’ al-khālīd*); al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī’*, fol. 2v: “triplicated water” (*al-mā’ al-muthallath*), fol. 3r: “licit water” (*al-mā’ al-ḥalāl*). Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 17, fol. 2v: “the stone’s water” (*mā’ al-ḥajar*); Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3:

a part of the stone.⁸³ According to Ibn Arfa' Ra's, Venus is the spirit (*rūḥ*) and the fugitive, western mercury (*al-zaybaq al-hārib al-gharbī*) at the beginning of the preparation (*tadbīr*).⁸⁴ Similarly, two glosses on *Shudhūr al-dhahab* define Venus as “the west” (*al-gharb*).⁸⁵ In *Ghāyat al-surūr*, al-Jildakī states that, while among the metals, Venus is copper, it also represents the “(slave) girls” (*al-banāt wa-l-jawārī*), which are the “moistures” (*al-ruṭūbāt*) that enter the parts of the stone.⁸⁶ Al-Irbilī understands Venus as a shiny earth or powder: “starry earth” (*al-arḍ al-najmiyya*), “earth of gold” (*arḍ al-dhahab*), “golden talcum” (*al-ṭalq al-dhahabī*).⁸⁷ Other codenames for Venus in al-Iznīqī's commentary refer to femininity: “daughter of the Sun” (*bint al-shams*) and “mother of natures” (*umm al-ṭabā'ī*).⁸⁸

4.1.3 *tathlīth*

Ibn Arfa' Ra's explains that there are different meanings to *tathlīth* in astrology (*fī l-nujūm*), in natural science (*fī l-ṭabī'a*), and in alchemy (*fī l-ṣinā'a*). While in natural science, it refers to tertian fever (*al-ḥummā al-muthallatha*), in astrology it means that two planets are located at a distance of three signs of the zodiac (*burūj*).⁸⁹ Most commentators define astrological *tathlīth* as two planets being located at a distance of four signs, which corresponds to one third of the ecliptic (*falak* or *niṭāq falak al-burūj*).⁹⁰ Al-Jildakī specifies that two planets at this distance are at an angle of 120° to each other.⁹¹ What the commentaries describe is the astrological aspect (*shakl*) of the trine (*tathlīth*, gr. τριγωνον, lat. *trinus aspectus*).⁹² The diverging definitions of the distance of the planets as three or four signs refer to the same phenomenon. Ibn Arfa' Ra's obviously did not include into his count the signs in which the planets are located, but only those that lie between them. Within the zodiac, there are four possible groups of three signs that are at a distance of 120° and form equilateral triangles. These are the four triplicities (*muthallathāt*), which are associated with the four elements.⁹³

“divine water” (*al-mā' al-ilāhī*); Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v “water” (*al-mā'*).

⁸³ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli'*, fol. 88v; *Ghāya*, p. 7. Gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Istanbul, Köprülü, Fazıl, 1295, fol. 1v. Al-Sīmāwī (*Durr*, fol. 6r) says that Venus itself is a stone.

⁸⁴ IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming. A gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v, also defines Venus as the spirit.

⁸⁵ MSS Geneva, Bibliothèque, Ms. O. 33, fol. 2v; Munich, BSB, Cod. arab. 881, fol. 2r.

⁸⁶ al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 7. The explanation of alchemical Venus as copper has also been recorded by SIGGEL 1950: 81; 1951: 10–11; 41 and ULLMANN 1972: 267.

⁸⁷ al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, pp. 11–12.

⁸⁸ al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawāli'*, fol. 7v.

⁸⁹ IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming. Al-Iznīqī (*Ṭawāli'*, fol. 2v) does also mention the meaning of *tathlīth* in geometry (*handasa*), where it refers to an equilateral triangle.

⁹⁰ al-SĪMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 8r; ANON., *Dā'ira*, fol. 2r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli'*, fol. 89v; *Durr*, fol. 48v; *Ghāya*, p. 5; al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawāli'*, fol. 2v. Al-Jildakī gives the same explanation in his *Sharḥ Risālat Biyūn al-Barhamī* (Commentary on ‘The Epistle of the Brahman Biyūn’), where he cites the first verse of *Shudhūr* and states that, according to Biyūn and Hermes Abūdashīr, *tathlīth* is “one third of the zodiac, i.e. four signs” (MS London, British Library, Or 11608, fol. 31v).

⁹¹ al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 5.

⁹² Cf. ULLMANN 1972: 356; YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, II: 158.

⁹³ HARTNER 1991: 84f.

MS Dublin, Chester Beatty Library, Ar 5433, fol. 11v (detail). Anonymous compilation of alchemical texts and illustrations, ca. 16th c. “Representation of the zodiac” (*ṣifat dā'irat [al-]falak*). Black lines mark the four triangles of the triplicities (*muthallathāt*).
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In *Ghāyat al-surūr*, al-Jildakī gives a detailed survey of trines of Mars and Venus in the four triplicities (*muthallathāt*) and their astrological implications.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ 1. Triplicity of the fiery signs (*al-burūj al-nāriyya*): When Mars is in Aries, Venus has to be in Leo or Sagittarius. This results in joy, well-being and the flowering of red flowers, by means of the power of Mars, who is in his house (*bayt*). In alchemy, this corresponds to the appearance of the red elixir (*al-iksīr al-aḥmar*). If Venus is in Aries, Mars has to be in Leo or Sagittarius. This is the detriment (*wabāl*) of Venus. 2. Triplicity of the airy signs (*al-burūj al-hawā'iyya*): In Gemini, Venus is in its apogee (*awj*) and Mars has tiring movement (*ḥaraka mu'ība*). Libra is the house of Venus and the detriment of Mars. 3. Triplicity of the watery signs (*al-burūj al-mā'iyya*): Cancer is the dejection (*hubūṭ*) of Mars, Scorpio is the detriment of Venus, and Pisces is the exaltation (*sharaf*) of Venus. If Venus connects to Mars from Pisces or Cancer, while Mars is in Scorpio, this results in happiness. 4. Triplicity of the earthy signs (*al-burūj al-turābiyya*): Taurus, the house of Venus, is the detriment of Mars. Virgo is the dejection of Venus. Capricorn is the exaltation of Mars. If the trine occurs with Mars in Capricorn and Venus in Taurus, it brings joy (al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, pp. 7–9). On houses and exaltations in astrology, see note 78. The sign located opposite to the house (*bayt*) of a planet is its detriment (*wabāl*), while the sign located opposite to its exaltation (*sharaf*) is its dejection (*hubūṭ*) (ULLMANN 1972: 353).

Al-Jildakī emphasises the auspicious character of the trine in astrology⁹⁵ and informs his readers that alchemists consider it to be the “aspect of perfect love” (*shakl al-mawadda al-tāmma*).⁹⁶ In this context, alchemical *tathlīth* is described as loving connection.⁹⁷ In *al-Durr al-manthūr*, al-Jildakī explains that Mars and Venus are in love with each other (*mutaḥābbān*) due to the position of their spheres.⁹⁸ Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s defines *tathlīth* as the process of “division” (*tafṣīl*) within the alchemical work, during which the “marriage” (*tazwīj*) of soul and spirit, i.e. Mars and Venus, happens.⁹⁹ The metaphor of “marriage” is also present in other commentaries. Two anonymous authors call it the “first pairing” (*al-izdiwāj al-awwal*) and the “first mixture” (*al-ikhtilāṭ al-awwal*).¹⁰⁰ According to several commentators and glossists, *tathlīth* means that one part of Mars is entered successively by four parts of Venus – just as the distance of two planets in a trine is four signs of the zodiac, as al-Jildakī remarks.¹⁰¹ These four female parts of moisture are called “wives” (*zawjāt*).¹⁰² Al-Jildakī describes them also as “divine water” (*al-mā’ al-ilāhī*) entering the “thirsty sacred earth” (*al-arḍ al-muqaddasa al-‘aṭshā*).¹⁰³ When the mixture of Mars and Venus is completed inside a glass vessel on a mild fire, the resulting compound (*murakkab*) turns black.¹⁰⁴ The author of *al-Dā’ira al-hindiyya* specifies that this process takes forty days and results in the “first blackness” (*al-sawād al-awwal*), also known as “magnesia” (*maghnisiyā*), “tree” (*shajar*), or “olive tree” (*zaytūn*), while another anonymous commentator calls it the “newborn” (*al-mawlūd*).¹⁰⁵ In *Ḥall mushkilāt al-Shudhūr*, Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s explains that the

⁹⁵ al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 48r: “the most bountiful aspect” (*absaṭ al-ashkāl*); *Ghāya*, p. 5: “benefic” (*sa’d*).

⁹⁶ al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 6.

⁹⁷ al-SĪMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 6r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 3v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 6.

⁹⁸ The Sun in the fourth sphere is the centre, around which circles are drawn. Each of these circles crosses the spheres of two planets, which share the same distance from the Sun and form couples of lovers. These are Saturn and the Moon (spheres 7 and 1), Jupiter and Mercury (spheres 6 and 2), and Mars and Venus (spheres 5 and 3). Therefore, in the realm of metals, lead loves silver, and iron mixes with copper without separating itself from it (al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 54r).

⁹⁹ IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Ḥall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Rabat, Private collection. The same process is represented in the first symbol of the alchemical treatise “The Mirror of Wonders” (*Mir’āt al-‘ajā’ib*): the hot-dry soul and the cold-moist spirit are depicted as a male and a female figure embracing each other inside an equilateral triangle (*tathlīth al-shakl*), cf. MÜLLER 2021: 706–708.

¹⁰⁰ *Tazwīj*: al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 10. *muzāwaja*: ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 2v; *izdiwāj*: ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r. *ikhtilāṭ*: ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 3v.

¹⁰¹ al-SĪMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 89v; *Ghāya*, p. 10; al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī’*, fol. 3v. Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’, 56, p. 3; Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 1116, fol. 1v; Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205, fol. 2v. The glossist of MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v, gives a diverging explanation of *tathlīth* as meaning for the male to be one third of the compound (*murakkab*).

¹⁰² al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 89v; *Ghāya*, p. 10.

¹⁰³ al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 49r; unmarked citation from *Durr* in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2572, fol. 1v.

¹⁰⁴ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 90r. Al-Jildakī writes that this substance is called “Saturn” (*zuḥal*). This seems contradictory, since he does also – like most other commentators – define Saturn as the “second blackness”, which is the result of the union of Jupiter and Mercury (cf. 4.2.3 and 4.2.4).

¹⁰⁵ ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 2v.; ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r. This black substance corresponds to the second symbol

process of “division” (*tafṣīl*), which includes the “marriage” (*tazwīj*), is also known as destruction, death, exit of spirits and souls, calcination (*taklīs*), and solution (*ḥall*) and is composed of three stages.¹⁰⁶

Al-Jildakī shows an inconsistent understanding of this hemistich in different commentaries of his. In *Maṭāli‘ al-budūr*, he explains that the process here described is the beginning of the alchemical work (*‘amal*) and preparation (*tadbīr*). Later in *al-Durr al-manthūr*, however, he writes that only ignorant people think Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s would start his poetry collection with the beginning of the preparation (*tadbīr*), and that, in reality, he has omitted the entire *tafṣīl*. Therefore, *Shudhūr al-dhahab* would be useful only for learned people and alchemists.¹⁰⁷ Given that Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s himself identifies the process of *tathlūth* as *tafṣīl* and Mars and Venus as substances “at the beginning of the preparation” (cf. 4.1.1 and 4.1.2), al-Jildakī seems to be wrong in his later interpretation.¹⁰⁸

Apart from the content-related explanations, al-Jildakī provides syntactical information on this hemistich. In *Ghāyat al-surūr*, he defines *idhā* as conditional particle (*sharṭ*), *thal-latha* as verb (*fī‘l*), *mirrīkh* and *zuhara* as objects (*maḥ‘ūl*) and *imru’* as subject (*fā‘il*).¹⁰⁹ These definitions have been copied as interlinear glosses in several manuscripts of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*.¹¹⁰

4.1.4 The Sun (*al-dhukā’*)

The most common explanation of *dhukā’*, both in the commentaries and in the glosses, is its, at times implicit, definition as a synonym of *shams* (“Sun”).¹¹¹ Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s probably chose *dhukā’* instead of *shams* in this verse for poetical and metrical reasons.

As for its alchemical meaning, almost all commentaries and glosses agree on the Sun being a symbol for the soul (*al-naḥs*).¹¹² Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s specifies that it is the soul at the beginning of the “second preparation” (*al-tadbīr al-thānī*), when it has reached its utmost

in the “Mirror of Wonders” (*Mir‘āt al-‘ajā‘ib*), cf. MÜLLER 2021: 708.

¹⁰⁶ IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Hall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Rabat, Private collection.

¹⁰⁷ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 87r; *Durr*, fols. 48v, 49r.

¹⁰⁸ This might indicate that al-Jildakī did not know Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s’s commentary, which he never cites in his works.

¹⁰⁹ al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 5. According to al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawāli‘*, fol. 2r, the subject of this verse, “someone” (*imru’*), can be either an experienced alchemist (*hakīm māhir*) or a disciple (*ḡālīb*).

¹¹⁰ MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 17, fol. 2v; Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 1116, fol. 1v; Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205, fol. 2v.

¹¹¹ IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming; al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 94v; *Durr*, fol. 44v; 62v; *Ghāya*, p. 5; glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3; Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v; Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 1109 (not foliated); Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 1116, fol. 1v; Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 2252, p. 1; Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v; Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205, fol. 2v; Tehran, Dānishgāh, 7207, fol. 1v. Some glossists specify that *dhukā’* is vocalized with *ḍamma*: MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 17, fol. 2v; Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Taymūr 71, p. 2, Manchester, John Rylands, 809, fol. 1v. Al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawāli‘*, fol. 3r, defines *dhukā’* as “Sun of wisdom” (*shams al-ḥikma*).

¹¹² IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming; al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 94v; ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r; glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Baghdad, Dār al-makhtūṭāt, 2-30654, fol. 53r; Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3; Rabat, Private collection.

“division” (*tafṣīl*) and purity and is therefore compared to one of the “two luminaries” (*al-nayyirān*).¹¹³ Al-Sīmāwī explains that it is the dissolved soul (*al-naḥs al-munḥalla*) of the male, which is carried by the Full Moon and concealed (*mustajanna*) inside of it.¹¹⁴ Similarly, an anonymous commentator defines it as the “dissolved soul inside the water” (*al-naḥs al-maḥlūla fī bāṭin al-mā*).¹¹⁵ The comments disagree about the properties of the Sun: while the anonymous author of *Sharḥ abyāt* and a glossist of a Riyadh manuscript of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* state that it is hot-dry, al-Jildakī describes it as hot-moist and the glossist of a Cairo manuscript defines it as “moist dye”.¹¹⁶ According to al-Jildakī, it has several codenames, such as “shadowless copper” (*al-nuḥās alladhī lā ḡill lahū*)¹¹⁷, “golden talcum” (*al-ṭalq al-dhahabī*),¹¹⁸ “red sulphur” (*al-kibrīt al-aḥmar*) and “new earth” (*al-arḍ al-jadīda*).¹¹⁹ Al-Iznīqī defines it as “fire” (*al-nār*).¹²⁰

4.1.5 The shining Full Moon (*al-badr al-munīr*)

In *Maṭāli‘ al-budūr* and *al-Durr al-manthūr*, al-Jildakī points to the fact that the Full Moon is described as “shining” (*munīr*). As he explains, this would not be the case during a lunar eclipse (*khusūf*), when it darkens due to its position in the cone shadow of the earth (*ḡill makhrūṭ al-arḍ*). In alchemy, this means that, in order for the Moon to leave the shadow, receive the light of the Sun, and become shining again after its eclipse, it has to be washed with sieves (*manākhil*) and purified from the “cone shadow of the philosophers’ earth” (*ḡill makhrūṭ arḍ al-falāsifa*).¹²¹

Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s explains that, at the beginning of the “second preparation” (*al-tadbīr al-thānī*), alchemists call the spirit (*rūḥ*) Moon, i.e. one of the “two luminaries” (*al-nayyirān*), because the spirit has been washed and reached its utmost purity, after its marriage (*tazwīj*) to the soul (*naḥs*) has been completed at the stage of “division” (*tafṣīl*).¹²² The definition of the Moon as spirit is given in other commentaries as well.¹²³ The author of *Sharḥ abyāt al-ma‘ānī* describes the Full Moon as a pure substance which carries the light provided by the

113 IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Ḥall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Rabat, Private collection.

114 al-SĪMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r.

115 ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r.

116 ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 49r; glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated); Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v. In astrology, the Sun is hot-dry, according to Abū Ma’shar (YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, I: 808f).

117 In the same commentary, al-Jildakī had already mentioned this codename as a synonym for Mars, cf. 4.1.1.

118 This codename was used for “Venus” by al-Irbilī, cf. 4.1.2. Apart from this codename of “golden talcum,” the explanation of the alchemical Sun as gold, as recorded by SIGGEL 1950: 83; 1951: 10–11; 43 and ULLMANN 1972: 267, is not present in the commentary tradition of *Shudhūr*.

119 al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 62v.

120 al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī‘*, fol. 3r.

121 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fols. 94v–95r; *Durr*, fol. 64r.

122 IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Ḥall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Rabat, Private collection.

123 ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 95r.

Sun and is luminous due to the alchemical preparation (*nayyir bi-l-tadbīr*).¹²⁴ Al-Jildakī also remarks that the Moon in itself is not luminous, but becomes a Full Moon only when filled with the light of the Sun.¹²⁵ Similarly, a glossist explains the Full Moon as moisture filled with the heat of the Sun, which is the soul.¹²⁶ In several commentaries and glosses, the Full Moon is defined as cold-moist and as water.¹²⁷ Al-Sīmāwī describes it also as female and silvery (*waraqī*) while al-Irbilī and al-Jildakī identify it with Venus, and al-Iznīqī calls it the “alchemists’ dye” (*ṣibgh al-qawm*).¹²⁸

4.1.6 *muqārana*

As Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s and other commentators point out, *muqārana* means to astrologers that two planets are located in the same sign of the zodiac, i.e. a conjunction of these planets.¹²⁹ Some commentaries specify that, within the sign, the planets have to be on the same degree (*daraja*).¹³⁰ Al-Jildakī explains the concept of conjunction by means of an imaginary straight line that passes through the centre of the earth and the lower one of both planets, and which, in the case of conjunction, will also pass through the upper planet before reaching the sphere of the zodiac.¹³¹ In *Ghāyat al-surūr*, he identifies the conjunction in this verse as the New Moon (*maḥāq al-qamar*), because, as he explains, a conjunction of Sun and Moon can only happen at the end of the lunar month, when the Moon appears as a waxing crescent. It only becomes a shining Full Moon in opposition (*muqābala*) to the Sun. Al-Jildakī presumes that it is for secret reasons that Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s called the New Moon in this verse a shining Full Moon.¹³² Al-Iznīqī also points to this contradiction, probably inspired by al-Jildakī, and writes that a Moon in conjunction with the Sun is not a shining Full Moon, but a New Moon.¹³³

¹²⁴ ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fols. 3v–4r.

¹²⁵ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 94v.

¹²⁶ MS Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3.

¹²⁷ Cold-moist: al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 3v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 49r. Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v, and Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v. Water: al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 49r. Gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated).

¹²⁸ al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, fol. 4r (here, the Moon is described as a body composed of iron and Venus); al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 94v; al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī‘*, fol. 3r. On the use of the term *al-qawm* (lit. “the people”) as auto-designation of alchemists, cf. Müller in IBN ARFA‘ RA’S (forthcoming). The association of the alchemical Moon with silver is also recorded by SIGGEL 1950: 86; 1951: 10–11; 47 and ULLMANN 1972: 267.

¹²⁹ IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming; al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r. ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 3v; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 94v; *Durr*, fol. 62v; al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī‘*, fol. 3r.

¹³⁰ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli‘*, fol. 94v; *Durr*, fol. 62v; al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī‘*, fol. 3r. Each sign of the zodiac is divided into 30 degrees of the total of 360 degrees of the ecliptic (ULLMANN 1972: 347). According to Abū Ma’shar, the strongest indication of the conjunction of two planets is “when there are 15 degrees or less between them in front of or behind them” (YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, I: 741).

¹³¹ al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 62v.

¹³² al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, pp. 5–6, 12.

¹³³ al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī‘*, fol. 3v.

In alchemy, *muqārana* is said to mean marriage (*muzāwaja*) or union (*ittiḥād*).¹³⁴ Al-Jildakī comments that alchemists have compared the union of Sun and Moon to sexual intercourse and pregnancy, with the conjunction of these planets resulting in the birth of the crescent Moon.¹³⁵ Within the alchemical work, the union of Sun and Moon makes blackness appear on the compound (*murakkab*), which al-Jildakī identifies with Saturn (*zuḥal*).¹³⁶ He also writes that the union of Sun and Moon, i.e. soul and spirit, is invisible to the eye and only perceptible through intellect (*‘aql*) and science (*‘ilm*).¹³⁷ A glossist defines the alchemical *muqārana* in this verse as “second watering” (*tasqiya*).¹³⁸

Grammatical explanations of this hemistich are provided by the glossist of a Rabat manuscript of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*: *wa-* is a conjunction (*‘atf*) that relates to *thallatha* in the former hemistich, *bi-l-badr* is linked (*muta‘allaq*) to *qārana*, *al-munīr* is an adjective (*ṣifa*) and *dhukā’* is an object (*maḥḥūl bihī*).¹³⁹

4.2 Verse 2

4.2.1 Jupiter (*al-mushtarī*)

In this verse, Jupiter is referred to as benefic (*sa‘d*), in accordance with its quality in astrology.¹⁴⁰ Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s and al-Iznīqī provide additional astrological information on the planet: it is more benefic than Venus, eastern (*mashriqī*), male and hot-moist,¹⁴¹ its exaltation (*sharaf*) is in Cancer (*al-saraṭān*) and its house (*bayt*) is Sagittarius (*al-qaws*).¹⁴² In *Ghāyat al-surūr*, al-Jildakī specifies that Jupiter is located in the second sphere, below Saturn.¹⁴³

As for the alchemical meanings of Jupiter, Ibn Arfa‘ Ra’s explains that it is the soul (*al-naḥs*) and the dye (*al-ṣibgh*).¹⁴⁴ Likewise, al-Irbilī and various glossists of *Shudhūr* consider Jupiter the soul.¹⁴⁵ Al-Jildakī and three anonymous commentators present a diverging

134 IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Ḥall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Rabat, Private collection; al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 6; unmarked citation from *Ghāya* in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205, fol. 2v.

135 al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 6.

136 ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 3r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 14; paraphrases from *Ghāya* in glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 17, fol. 2v; Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205, fol. 2v; al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī’*, fol. 3v.

137 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 95r.

138 MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v.

139 MS Rabat, Ḥasaniyya, 1116, fol. 1v.

140 Cf. YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, I: 690.

141 IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming. The hot-moist nature of Jupiter is also indicated in an interlinear gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v, while a marginal gloss in the same MS qualifies Jupiter, being the soul (*al-naḥs*), as hot-dry.

142 al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālī’*, fol. 4r.

143 al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya* I, p. 15; unmarked citation from *Ghāya* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205, fol. 2v.

144 IBN ARFA‘ RA’S, *Ḥall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Ḥall* in a gloss on *Shudhūr*, MS Rabat, Private collection.

145 al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, p. 17. Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated); Oxford,

interpretation of Jupiter as whiteness (*bayāḍ*), white earth (*al-arḍ al-bayḍāʾ*) or sieved earth (*al-arḍ al-mankhūla*). The anonymous author of *Sharḥ abyāt al-maʿānī* associates Jupiter with white colour and the absence of impurities (*al-naqāʾ min al-awsākh*).¹⁴⁶ The same idea is present in *al-Dāʾira al-hindiyya*, al-Jildakī's *Maṭālīʿ al-budūr* and an anonymous commentary, where Jupiter appears as white earth sediment or ash, which has been cleared of dirt.¹⁴⁷ In this context, all three commentaries cite the following verse of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* and identify Jupiter with the earth of Hermes:

لِهَرْمُسَ أَرْضٌ تُثْبِتُ الْعِزَّ وَالْغِنَى إِذَا مَا انْتَقَى عَنْهَا غَرِيبُ الْحَشَائِشِ¹⁴⁸

Hermes owns an earth that produces power and wealth,
Whenever it is clear of foreign herbs.

In *al-Durr al-manthūr*, al-Jildakī gives another interpretation of Jupiter as being the union (*ijtimāʾ*) of the substances of Mars and the Sun, while al-Sīmāwī considers it one of the “two remaining thirds” (*al-thulthān al-bāqiyān*) of the moisture (*ruṭūba*).¹⁴⁹ Other identifications of Jupiter in glosses on *Shudhūr al-dhahab* include the third watering (*tasqiya*) and the newborn (*al-mawlūd*).¹⁵⁰

4.2.2 Mercury (ʿuṭārid)

Ibn Arfaʿ Ra's, al-Jildakī and al-Iznīqī provide astrological information on the planet Mercury, which is considered cold-moist and “mixing” (*mumtazij* or *mumāzīj*).¹⁵¹ It is located in the second sphere, above the Moon, and its houses are Gemini (*al-jawzāʾ*) and Virgo (*al-sunbula*).¹⁵²

Bodleian, Huntington 405, fol. 1v; Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v.

¹⁴⁶ ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r.

¹⁴⁷ ANON., *Dāʾira*, fol. 4r: *al-arḍ al-rāsiba idhā byaḍḍat wa-nuqqiyat min al-awsākh*; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālīʿ*, fol. 87r: *al-ramād al-ṣāʾid ʿan al-ramād [...] ḥīna khullīṣat min awsākhiḥ; al arḍ al-mankhūla* (the latter was copied in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyāʾ 56, p. 3); ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r: *al-arḍ al-bayḍāʾ [...] nuqqiyat min sāʾir al-adrān*. In *Maṭālīʿ* (fol. 95r), al-Jildakī identifies Jupiter not only with ash, but also with the “remains of the eagle” (*baqiyyat al-ʿuqāb*). This corresponds to the fifth symbol in “The Mirror of Wonders” (*Mirʾāt al-ʿajāʾib*), where the eagle is also described as ash, cf. MÜLLER 2021: 711–712. The association of Jupiter with whiteness might be related to its meaning of tin or *Weißblei* “white lead” (as opposed to *Schwarzblei* “black lead”, i.e. Saturn) in other alchemical texts (SIGGEL 1951: 10; cf. 1950: 88; 1951: 51; ULLMANN 1972: 267).

¹⁴⁸ Poem 18, verse 1, in ed. DOLGUSHEVA (forthcoming).

¹⁴⁹ al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fols. 49v; 65v; al-SĪMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r.

¹⁵⁰ MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated) and Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v.

¹⁵¹ IBN ARFAʿ RA'S, *Hall*, forthcoming; al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 15. The astrologer Abū Maʿshar explains Mercury's “mixing” (*mumāzīj*) characteristic as follows: “Mercury is a benefic with benefics and a malefic with malefics, masculine with masculine (planets), feminine with feminine (planets) [...]. In each sign and with each planet, it is like the nature of that sign and planet [...]. When Mercury is alone [...], it shows its property and it becomes a benefic” (YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, I: 389).

¹⁵² al-IZNĪQĪ, *Ṭawālīʿ*, fols. 4r; 5r.

According to Ibn Arfa' Ra's and the author of *Sharḥ abyāt al-ma'ānī*, Mercury represents the spirit (*rūḥ*) in the alchemical meaning of this verse.¹⁵³ At the same time, it is the water (*mā'*), which carries the dye (*ṣibgh*) and the soul (*naḥs*).¹⁵⁴ In his different commentaries, al-Jildakī calls it either the “triplicated water” (*al-mā' al-muthallath*), the “cold-moist water” (*al-mā' al-bārid al-raṭb*), or the “divine water” (*al-mā' al-ilāhī*).¹⁵⁵ Other commentators describe it as “moisture” (*ruṭūba*).¹⁵⁶ As the planet Mercury “mixes” with other planets, the alchemical Mercury is receptive to the dyes and serves as intermediary (*mutawassit*) between the substances.¹⁵⁷ Al-Jildakī points out that this is the alchemists' mercury (*zaybaq al-qawm*), not the common mercury (*zaybaq al-sūq*).¹⁵⁸ Several commentators have identified Mercury with Hermes in another verse of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* (cf. 4.2.1).¹⁵⁹ One of them also compares it to gold that is sown in the white, silvery earth.¹⁶⁰ A glossist of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* shows an understanding of Mercury that is contrary to the commentaries, as he explains it as the dry soul and earth.¹⁶¹

4.2.3 *muwāṣala*

According to Ibn Arfa' Ra's, *muwāṣala* refers to the conjunction (*muqārana*) of two “bright” (*nayyir*) planets or of a “bright” and a “dark” (*muḥlim*) one, as opposed to the conjunction of two dark planets.¹⁶² Since Jupiter is considered “bright”,¹⁶³ *muwāṣala* appears as the appropriate term for its conjunction with Mercury. Al-Jildakī defines the meaning of the term in astrology as the connection of one planet's rays to another one (*ittiṣāl shu'ā' kawkab bi-kawkab ākhar*).¹⁶⁴

¹⁵³ IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Hall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Hall* in a gloss of MS Rabat, Private collection; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r.

¹⁵⁴ IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Hall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Hall* in a gloss of MS Rabat, Private collection. Al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, p. 17 (the water that contains soul and spirit, without it the soul could not reach Saturn); ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r (the carrier of the dyes, *ḥāmil al-aṣbāgh*). Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Hyderabad, OMLRI, *Kīmiyā'* 56, p. 3 and Oxford, Bodleian, Huntington 405, fol. 1v (the water); MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v (the fourth watering).

¹⁵⁵ al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli'*, fol. 98r; *Durr*, fol. 49r; *Ghāya*, p. 15; unmarked citation from *Ghāya* in a gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Tehran, Dānishgāh, 1205, fol. 2v.

¹⁵⁶ al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11r; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r. Gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated).

¹⁵⁷ ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r. Glosses in on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, Taymūr 71, p. 2; Qom, al-Ma'had al-'ālī, 281 (not foliated).

¹⁵⁸ al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 66r. On the alchemical identification of the planet Mercury with mercury, cf. SIGGEL 1950: 84; 1951: 10–11; 45 and ULLMANN 1972: 267.

¹⁵⁹ ANON., *Dā'ira*, fol. 4r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli'*, fol. 98r; ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r.

¹⁶⁰ ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r.

¹⁶¹ MS Riyadh, KSU, 1716, fol. 1v.

¹⁶² IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Hall*, forthcoming. Or, as he puts it, every *muwāṣala* is a *muqārana*, but not every *muqārana* is a *muwāṣala*. Likewise, al-Jildakī (*Durr*, fol. 64v) states that a *muwāṣala* can only happen as a *muqārana* (*al-muwāṣala lā yakūn illā 'an muqārana*).

¹⁶³ IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Hall*, forthcoming.

¹⁶⁴ al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 65v.

Alchemically, Ibn Arfa' Ra's uses the conjunction of the planets as a metaphor for the union of soul (*naḥs*) and spirit (*rūḥ*), because their union strengthens their dye (*ṣibgh*), just as the union of the planets strengthens their light.¹⁶⁵ As he explains, the alchemical *muwāṣala* corresponds to the so-called “nine waterings” (*al-tasāqī al-tis'a*).¹⁶⁶ Al-Jildakī gives detailed information on the “waterings” in *Maṭāli' al-budūr*, which has later been copied by glossists of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*. The “divine water” (*al-mā' al-ilāhī*) is divided into nine parts, three for the whiteness (*bayāḍ*) and six for the redness (*ḥumra*). The parts of the whiteness belong to the Moon, to Venus and to Mercury, while four of the six parts of the redness belong to Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and the Sun. The remaining two parts belong to the “head” (*al-ra's*) and the “tail” (*al-dhanab*). During the *muwāṣala*, the three parts of the whiteness are added to the compound (*murakkab*) and cause the appearance of blackness.¹⁶⁷ With the “head” and the “tail”, al-Jildakī refers to the lunar nodes (*al-ʿuqdatān*), i.e., the two points of intersection between the orbit of the Moon and the ecliptic, which were considered invisible “pseudo-planets” in Indian and Islamic astrology. They were imagined as the “head” and the “tail” of a dragon (*tinnīn*) which caused the solar and lunar eclipses.¹⁶⁸ In an anonymous commentary on *Shudhūr*, there is another reference to “the head” and “the tail” in the context of *muwāṣala*: the author states that, when Jupiter unites with Mercury, “the head bends towards the tail” (*in'aṭafa al-ra's 'alā al-dhanab*).¹⁶⁹ This image corresponds to the ancient alchemical symbol of the ouroboros (οὐροβόρος), a circular snake or dragon that devours its own tail.¹⁷⁰ In the alchemical treatise “The Mirror of Wonders” (*Mir'āt al-ʿajā'ib*), this snake or dragon (*thu'bān* or *tinnīn*) is a synonym of the “second blackness” (*al-sawād al-thānī*) and the “human of the philosophers” (*insān al-falāsifa*) and marks the beginning of the “second work” (*al-ʿamal al-thānī*).¹⁷¹ The same stage of the alchemical process is described in the second verse of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, as Ibn Arfa' Ra's explains that it happens during the “second work” (*al-*

165 IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Hall*, forthcoming. Cf. also al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli'*, fol. 98r: the *muwāṣala* between Jupiter and Mercury is their marriage (*munākaha*), with Mercury as groom and the earth as bride. On a more detailed level, Ibn Arfa' Ra's explains that during *muwāṣala*, spirit, souls and dyes are extracted and added to the body.

166 IBN ARFA' RA'S, *Hall*, forthcoming. The “nine waterings” are also described in the eighth symbol of “The Mirror of Wonders” (*Mir'āt al-ʿajā'ib*), where *tasqiya* is defined as the action of moistening the earth with a liquid that gets divided into nine parts, of which three belong to the Moon and six to the Sun. These are also known under the name of “the seven planets” (*al-kawākib al-sab'a*). In the illustrations of “The Mirror of Wonders”, the waterings are depicted as crabs (*saraṭānāt*), often divided by their colouring in three white, black or blue crabs on the one hand, and six red or golden crabs on the other hand. In an earlier illustration of Ibn Umayl's *Kitāb al-Mā' al-waraqī wa-l-arḍ al-najmiyya* (“The Silvery Water and the Starry Earth”), the waterings appear as nine “ravens” (*ghirbān*); cf. MÜLLER 2021: 714.

167 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāli'*, fol. 98v; unmarked citations from *Maṭāli'* in glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Azhariyya, 5926, fol. 27v, and Riyadh, KSU, 3571, fol. 1v. Cf. al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, p. 15f.

168 HARTNER 1957: 501f.; cf. ULLMANN 1972: 347.

169 ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24v.

170 Cf. KÄPPEL 2002: 1053.

171 MÜLLER 2021: 713–714. The snake or dragon is the seventh of the nine symbols of the mirror.

‘amal al-thānī),¹⁷² and the author of *al-Dā’ira al-hindiyya* writes that the mixture of Jupiter and Mercury makes the human of the philosophers (*insān al-falāsifa*), i.e. Saturn, appear.¹⁷³

As for grammatical explanations, al-Jildakī comments that the subject of the verb *wāṣala* is still *imru’*, the alchemist.¹⁷⁴

4.2.4 Saturn (zuḥal)

Ibn Arfa’ Ra’s informs his readers about the astrological characteristics of the planet Saturn, which is located in the seventh sphere and considered male, cold-dry and dark (*muḥlim*).¹⁷⁵

In alchemy, it therefore refers to the black, dark earth (*arḍ*)¹⁷⁶ or body (*jasad*)¹⁷⁷, also known as the “second blackness” (*al-sawād al-thānī*).¹⁷⁸ This blackness appears as a result of the *muwāṣala* or mixture of Jupiter and Mercury.¹⁷⁹ According to al-Jildakī and various glossists, this happens at the beginning of the so-called “composition” (*tarkīb*), which was preceded by the “division” (*tafṣīl*).¹⁸⁰ Since, among the metals, Saturn is associated with lead, al-Jildakī writes that ignorant people thought Ibn Arfa’ Ra’s was referring to common lead (*raṣāṣ al-‘amma*) in this verse of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, and then tried in vain to perform the alchemical preparation (*tadbīr*) with it.¹⁸¹

172 IBN ARFA’ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming.

173 ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 5r; cf. ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r. When describing this process in detail, the author of *Dā’ira* writes that the appearing blackness could not be reached and washed by the moisture in the first place (*lam taṣīl al-ruṭūba ilayhī li-taḡhsulāhū fī bad’ al-amr*). Al-Jildakī criticises this passage in *Maṭālī’* (fol. 99r), as he understands it as a “delusion of those who think that the blackness that appeared would be dirt (*wasakh*) [...], which the moisture could not reach during the ‘division’ (*lam taṣīl al-ruṭūba ‘ind al-tafṣīl ilayhī*).” He proceeds: “Many people have made this mistake. I have seen exactly the same statement in *The Indian Circle* [...]. This is an outrageous mistake (*ghalaṭ fāḥish*)!” Al-Jildakī also refers to this criticism in his later work *Natā’ij al-fikar* (MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 2111, fol. 30r): “The author of *The Indian Circle* [...] has claimed that the cause of this blackness are the remains of dirt, which the *tafṣīl* could not remove. We have replied to him and explained the incorrectness of his statement (*fasād mā dhahaba ilayhī*) in our book *The Rising Places of the Full Moons* [...].”

174 al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 66r.

175 IBN ARFA’ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming. The astrologer Abū Ma’shar also describes Saturn as cold-dry, dark and indicating masculinity (YAMAMOTO/BURNETT 2019, I: 426–427; 802–803).

176 IBN ARFA’ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming; unmarked citation from *Hall* in a gloss of MS Rabat, Private collection; al-SIMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11v; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4r. Cf. al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, p. 17 (“earth of the compound”, *arḍ al-murakkab*); glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Oxford, Bodleian, Huntington 405, fol. 1v (“earth”); Tavşanlı, Zeytinoğlu, 631, fol. 1v (“earth of the alchemists’ stone”, *arḍ ḥajar al-qawm*).

177 IBN ARFA’ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming; ANON., *Sharḥ abyāt*, fol. 4v. Gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated).

178 ANON., *Dā’ira*, fol. 5r; al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 98v; cf. gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek, A 1290, fol. 1v (“blackness”). One glossist calls it the “first blackness” (*al-sawād al-awwal*), MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v.

179 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 98v; ANON., *Sharḥ*, fol. 24r.

180 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 98v; *Durr*, fol. 66r; glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Azhariyya, 5926, fol. 27v; Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 177, fol. 2v; Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyā’ 56, p. 3; Riyadh, KSU, 3571, fol. 1v. Al-Jildakī explains in *Maṭālī’* (fol. 99v) that the “first blackness” occurs at the beginning of *tafṣīl*, while the “second blackness” occurs at the beginning of *tarkīb*.

181 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭālī’*, fol. 91r. On the identification of alchemical Saturn with lead, cf. SIGGEL 1950: 81;

Al-Jildakī understands the preposition *ilā* in this verse as an expression of purpose (*ḥarf ghāya*), synonym to *hattā*. This explanation has been copied by several glossists of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*.¹⁸² Accordingly, *ilā zuḥal* would mean “in order for Saturn to appear”.¹⁸³

The term *ḍiyāʾ* (“brightness”) is mostly explained as white colour or whiteness (*bayāḍ*).¹⁸⁴ Al-Jildakī specifies that it is the “second whiteness” (*al-bayāḍ al-thānī*).¹⁸⁵ Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s calls it “the solar colour” (*al-lawn al-shamsī*), which appears on the body when soul and spirit are added to it.¹⁸⁶ As stated by al-Sīmāwī, the whitening of Saturn is accomplished through the application of liquids (*ruṭūbāt*) that wash away the blackness.¹⁸⁷ When it gains brightness, Saturn is transformed into the “white earth” (*al-arḍ al-bayḍāʾ*), on which one sows the gold.¹⁸⁸ This is when the “elixir of whiteness” (*iksīr al-bayāḍ*) is complete.¹⁸⁹ Al-Sīmāwī writes that, after the whiteness, Saturn will eventually turn red. Similarly, al-Irbilī comments that this verse points to the process of reddening (*taḥmīr*).¹⁹⁰

5 Conclusion

إعلم أن قاعدة علم الصناعة الإلهية موقوف على معرفة علم الأحكام النجومية.

“Know that the science of the Divine Art [*i.e.*, of alchemy] is based on the knowledge of the science of astrology” (al-JILDAKĪ, *Ghāya*, p. 11).

As the analysis of commentaries and glosses on the two “planetary” opening verses of Ibn Arfaʿ Ra’s’s alchemical poetry collection *Shudhūr al-dhahab* has shown, there is certainly some truth to this statement of al-Jildakī. The commentators and glossists explain the verses on different levels, mainly alchemical and astrological, and – to a lesser extent – grammatical. Interrelations between the explanatory texts are obvious, for instance, in the cases of citations from commentaries by glossists in manuscripts of *Shudhūr al-dhahab*, but also in some references of commentators to former commentaries. Within the commentary tradition, however, direct citations from other commentaries on *Shudhūr al-dhahab* seem rather rare, or are at least not marked as such. Nonetheless, the different commentaries and glosses provide, as a whole, remarkably consistent explications of the poetry collection’s two

1951: 10–11; 41 and ULLMANN 1972: 267.

182 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 98v; *Durr*, fol. 66r. Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Azhariyya, 5926, fol. 27v; Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 177, fol. 2v; Riyadh, KSU, 3571, fol. 1v.

183 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 99r.

184 Glosses on *Shudhūr* in MSS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 177, fol. 2v; Gotha, Forschungsbibliothek., Ms. orient. A 1290, fol. 1v.

185 al-JILDAKĪ, *Maṭāliʿ*, fol. 99r; Gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Hyderabad, OMLRI, Kīmiyāʾ 56, p. 3. Another gloss in MS Istanbul, Topkapı, Ahmet III, 1718, fol. 2v, defines it as “first whiteness” (*al-bayāḍ al-awwal*).

186 IBN ARFAʿ RA’S, *Hall*, forthcoming.

187 al-SĪMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11v.

188 ANON., *Dāʾira*, fol. 5v; cf. gloss on *Shudhūr* in MS Cairo, Dār al-kutub, 129 (not foliated).

189 al-JILDAKĪ, *Durr*, fol. 66r.

190 al-IRBILĪ, *Sharḥ*, p. 17; al-SĪMĀWĪ, *Durr*, fol. 11v.

opening verses on the planets and the alchemical processes implied, with evident parallels to other Arabic texts on alchemy, like “The Mirror of Wonders” (*Mir’āt al-‘ajā’ib*). In this context, it is noteworthy that the alchemical meanings of the planets in the commentary tradition of *Shudhūr al-dhahab* go beyond their traditional identification with the seven metals, as described by Siggel and Ullmann, since they are mainly identified with other substances or aspects of the alchemical work. As al-Jildakī indicates with regard to Mercury and Saturn, the metals mercury and lead, which are associated with these planets, should not be understood in their literal sense, but as alchemical codenames. Future research might show to what extent this concept applies to other texts of Arabic alchemy as well.

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