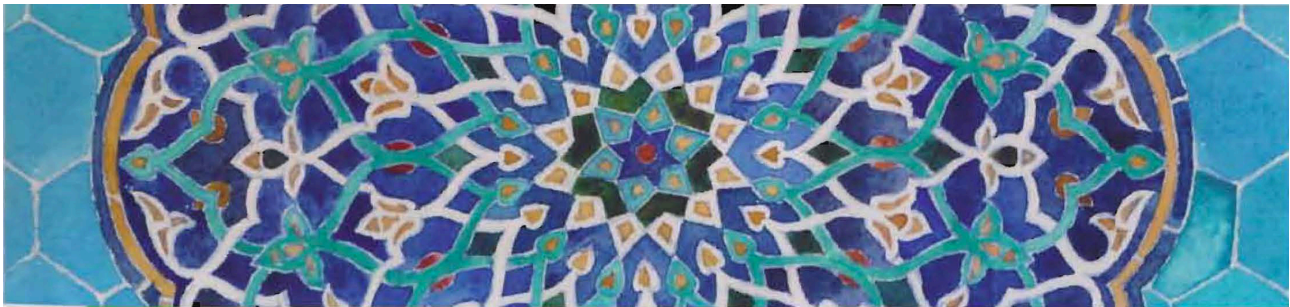


# Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society CIO

Members Newsletter

Date: January 2019

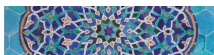


Dear Members

In this newsletter:

- New charitable status for the Society
- Fundraising
- Events
- Young Writers Award
- Digital Manuscript Archive
- Finance
- Journal
- News from affiliated groups

## **The Society**



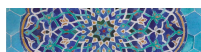
It is a pleasure to announce that, in July 2018, the former Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society became the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society CIO. The decision to seek charitable status was made because those of us who have run the Society for the past 40 years have become concerned about those who will succeed us and what form the Society might take in the future. It was determined that the Society should be opened up, a proper legal framework established, that Trustees should be appointed and formal Objects agreed. To this end, the Society was advised to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, a structure designed by the Charities Commission to cater for smaller charities.

It has been agreed that the Society's Charitable Objectives are:

*The advancement of education for the public benefit by promoting, sustaining and increasing individual and collective knowledge of the works of Muhyiddin Ibn Arabi (1165-1240CE) and those people who have perpetuated them by such means as the Trustees think fit but including study, research and the dissemination of the useful results of such research, publication, translation and communication of his written works.*

Now that the 'new' Society is up and running, our task is to formulate a strategy that will safeguard the Society's future. To this end, committees have been formed which are directly responsible to the Trustees. Their remit is to examine areas such as fundraising, membership, education, the Manuscript Archive, our library, communications, publications and events. We would very much like to invite anyone, who feels they can assist us, to get in touch with a view to joining one of the committees and helping us ensure the future vitality of the Society.

## **Fundraising**



We are delighted to report that as a CIO, MIAS is now eligible to receive Gift Aid in the UK, for both regular and single gifts. This enables us to claim an additional 25% from the Government for your gift, while higher rate tax-payers can themselves claim 20% tax relief on their gross donation. In order for MIAS to collect Gift Aid, donors must fill in and return a form which can be found at:

<http://ibnarabisociety.org/infopdf/Gift%20Aid%20form.pdf>

Alternatively donors can let us know in writing that they have paid income tax or capital gains tax equivalent to the Gift Aid amount, in that tax year. For further information about Gift Aid, please visit the [HM Revenue & Customs](#) website.

## **Events**



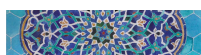
### **Annual Symposium**

Symposia - conferences that encourage dialogue and conversation - are essential to the public education that is core to the new CIO. We are continuing to run annual symposia in the UK as well as to encourage and advise on those in other countries (Spain, Italy, Australia, USA). At Wolfson College in Oxford a one day symposium was held in May 2018 entitled *The Alchemy of Love* with Professor Michael Sells, Professor Stefan Sperl and Stephen Hirtenstein, the editor of the Society's Journal.

In support of our charitable and educational aims, we were able to offer a number of substantially subsidised tickets. These were popular and enabled the symposium to reach a wide audience. The talks have been published as podcasts: <http://ibnarabisociety.org/podcasts/index.html> and are being published as videos. We have been given generous donations to run symposia, so costs are not a problem – but please, we need people adept at communication and other skills, who are willing to help with the organisation. Most work is done by email but we also need practical help during the events. If you would like to join the team please let me know.

*Richard Twinch, Events Coordinator: [rtwinch@gmail.com](mailto:rtwinch@gmail.com)*

## **Young Writers Award - 2019**



We are pleased to announce that in 2019, the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society will be presenting a Young Writers Award for the fourth time. This tri-annual event offers a prize of US\$1000 for an essay by a writer under the age of 35 on a subject related to the thought of Ibn ‘Arabi or his school. It must be in English, and no more than 9,000 words in length.

All entries will be submitted to the Journal of Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society for consideration; there is no guarantee that they will be accepted, but in previous years, not only the winners but also other entries have been published.

Entries will be accepted from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019, and must be received before 1<sup>st</sup> October. The winner will be announced at the UK AGM in November. The judges this year are:

Eric Geoffroy, University of Strasburg

Stefan Sperl, SOAS, London

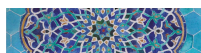
Cecilia Twinch, Senior Research Fellow, Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society

Essays can be sent digitally to [mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org](mailto:mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org), but they need to be accompanied by an entry form which can be downloaded from the Society web-site or obtained by email request.

For further information, please see the MIAS web-site, <http://www.ibnarabisociety.org/index.htm>, or Jane Clark, Senior Research Fellow of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society, at [librarian@ibnarabisociety.org](mailto:librarian@ibnarabisociety.org)

*Jane Clark, Senior Research Fellow and Librarian*

## Manuscript Archive



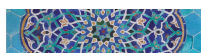
### Archive Report January 2019

Over the past year discussions about the long-term future of the archive have been ongoing. We have been focusing particularly on the technology needed to support an online database and catalogue which can be accessed by members (it is currently only available to selected scholars). We have been in discussions with universities in the UK and in the USA, as well as with our honorary fellows and members with computer expertise, to find the best solution.

The archive currently has a database of detailed information on over 3,000 manuscripts, as well as a large collection of digital images and pdfs of the best historical manuscripts, administered by the Society Librarian, Jane Clark. One major outcome of this collection is the support we have given to scholars to enable the production of critical editions (see below), and we are delighted to announce that about half of the extant works by Ibn 'Arabi have been published in excellent new editions based on the MIAS archive.

Stephen Hirtenstein made one further foray into the Turkish libraries in October, particularly focusing on what remains of Sadruddin al-Qunawi's private library. His research will be published in an article for JMIAS this year.

*Stephen Hirtenstein*



### Critical Editions of Ibn 'Arabi works

The archive project has had two main aims; firstly, preserving the heritage of Ibn 'Arabi's early manuscripts and secondly, gathering together the best manuscripts so that good Arabic editions of his works can be produced, thus opening the way to good translations into English and well-founded studies of his ideas.

By 'good Arabic texts' we mean, on the whole, what are called 'critical editions'. These are scholarly editions based on a number of different manuscripts which have been carefully compared, and the variations between them systematically noted. The better the manuscripts upon which an edition is based, the more accurate it can be. Therefore, in the archive we have aimed to identify and digitise a respectable number (five or six are normally adequate) of what we call 'historic texts' for every verified work.

Consequently, it has been part of the archive's on-going work to collaborate with scholars who wish to edit the texts but cannot, for whatever reason, access them in their home setting.

When we first started the project in 2002, we could count the number of critical editions on one hand. Even in 2012, when Stephen Hirtenstein and myself wrote up our findings in the Society Journal (see ‘Establishing Ibn ‘Arabi’s Heritage’ in JMIAS 52, pp. 1–32), we wrote that: “there are at present few critical editions of the Arabic texts...” But the situation has since changed dramatically. Our latest tally shows that 53 of Ibn ‘Arabi’s works have now been produced in critical editions – which is just half of the 106 works which we consider to be the true *corpus* – although not all of them have been published. They have been done by a wide variety of people all around the world, many of them private scholars undertaking the painstaking work of editing as an act of pure service. Two groups with whom we have worked closely deserve a special mention.

Firstly, a group led by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Manṣūb at the al-Safa Centre in the Yemen, who, despite the horrific war taking place around them, have published not only an invaluable critical edition of *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya*, but editions of 25 other works. Their latest collection includes the first published critical editions of *K. al-‘Abādila*, *K.al-Tajalliyāt* and *Tāj al-Rasā’il* along with 19 shorter works (published by al-Qudus, Cairo, 2018). Secondly, the Ibn ‘Arabi Foundation in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, led by Abrār Aḥmed Shāhī, has edited 20 works since 2008, 10 of them published and 10 awaiting publication, plus translations into Urdu which makes them accessible to the huge populations of the Indian sub-continent (see <http://ibnularabifoundation.org>). Special mention should also be made of the work of Honorary Fellow Mahmud Kiliç and his students in Turkey, particularly of his excellent critical edition of *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* which includes a facsimile of the earliest manuscript (Litera Yayincilik, Istanbul, 2016).

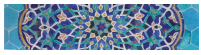
It is wonderful to see these good editions appearing, and it has been an honour to have had some part in the process which is bringing them about. In the near future, we hope to provide a reference list of all the best editions for members, which will be available on the MIAS web-site.

*Jane Clark, Senior Research Fellow and Librarian*



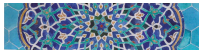
shaykh ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Mansūb with his son Samī‘, at the International Day of the Arabic Language, held by the Yemen Scientific and Linguistic Academy in January, where special tribute was paid to ‘Abd al-Mansūb for his work on manuscripts and critical editions.

## **Finance**



The Society relies primarily on membership subscriptions and the provision of time by its supporters, while also gratefully accepting donations. Donations are often made for specific purposes, such as the Archive Project or Symposia, and are therefore set aside for these activities. Notwithstanding, over the past 12 month period the Society's income has exceeded its expenditure. This has been made possible by the continuing generosity of our supporters whose gifts of time and money keep the Society running.

## **Journal**



We apologise for the late publication of Volume 64 of the Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society Journal. We anticipate that it will be dispatched by the end of January.

## **News from affiliated groups - Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society Latina**



### **Spain**

As many of you know, Muhyiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society Latina, commonly known as MIAS-Latina, is based in Puertas de Castilla Cultural Centre in Murcia, Spain, which is Ibn 'Arabi's birthplace. It is an independent organisation, affiliated to the UK Society, which is meant for Spanish speakers, as well as Catalan, Portuguese and Italian speakers. Pablo Beneito is the main initiator of events. He is ably assisted by Francisco Martínez Albarracín and many others.

On March 9th-11th, 2018 the *Third International Meeting of Ibn 'Arabi Reading Circles* was held at the Sadhana Centre in Valencia. Speakers and delegates came from Ibn 'Arabi reading circles in various parts of Spain, as well as Portugal and elsewhere. The title was *Reading/s of Ibn 'Arabi in our time* and it included, among its 18 talks, several group activities, including a geometry workshop and two concerts.

On May 25th-27th, the Eighth International MIAS-Latina Symposium entitled *Ibn 'Arabi: Himma – Creative Energy* was held at the City Museum of Murcia. During the three-day programme of talks, Ignacio Béjar provided music on a variety of instruments and there was an art exhibition of works by Eloísa Torres.

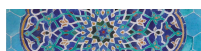
The MIAS Latina 2018 awards ceremony also took place at the Symposium. This year's winners were:

Pierre Lory from (EPHE) Sorbonne University, Paris, who was awarded the *Tarjuman Prize* for translation, research, and publishing.

Videoartist Toni Serra, also known as Abu Ali, from Barcelona and Marrakech, who was awarded the *Barzakh (or Isthmus) Prize*.

And the *Hikma* or Wisdom Prize, was awarded to the Santa Clara Museum, Murcia and was collected by the museum's curator, María Angeles Gómez Ródena.

*Cecilia Twinch, Senior Research Fellow*



## Italy



It is exciting to announce that, on September 22nd, 2018, the first symposium to be held in Italy took place in Turin. It was entitled *Ibn 'Arabi and the Unity of Existence* and was organised by Omar Zein in collaboration with MIAS Latina and the Circolo dei Lettori Cultural Centre in Turin. Papers were given by Carmela Crescenti, Simone Dario Nardello, and Maria de Cillis.

The Symposium was well attended and very well received and, as a result, it is hoped to hold further events in Italy.

Contact us:

PO Box 892

Oxford

OX2 7XL

[mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org](mailto:mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org)