The Annual General Meeting of the Ibn ‘Arabi Society is an occasion for reporting on its activities over the past year. Since the membership of the Society is very widespread (in some 36 countries), it would be very difficult for a lot of members to be in London for the presentations. So we have collected them here.

The Archive Project report came in two parts. In the first, Two visits to Turkey, Stephen Hirtenstein gives a flavour of what it was like to look for manuscripts in some important libraries in Istanbul in April and May 2015. Jane Clark’s report covers three areas – Manuscript acquisitions by the Society over the past year, Developments in the Catalogue of manuscripts and the catalogue of works by Ibn ‘Arabi, and lastly Critical editions, a major fruit of the manuscript collection.

David Hornsby reported on the Journal, now at Volume 58. He outlined the increasingly professional production process, and raised the prospect of the Journal also appearing in electronic format, something which would be welcomed by University library subscribers and many members in areas where post is uncertain, not to mention the smartphone generation.

In the Library report, Jane Clark picked out some of the books which the Library has received in 2015. One of these, The Secrets of Voyaging (Ibn ‘Arabi’s Kitab al-Isfār), translated by Angela Jaffray, includes a critical edition using manuscripts from the Manuscript Archive, as were three critical editions printed alongside Urdu translations produced by the Ibn ‘Arabi Foundation in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

Jane also announced the third Young Writer Award, which is now a tri-annual event. It offers a prize of US$ 1,000 for an essay by a writer under the age of 35 on a subject related to the thought of Ibn ‘Arabī or his school.

Richard Twinch gave details of Events in the UK, notably the Symposium held in Oxford in May 2015, A Living Legacy: Ibn ‘Arabi in Today’s World. These days talks from the Symposium begin to become available on Youtube quite quickly, as well as through podcasts. The AGM itself was held in London for the first time in 30 years, which enabled more members to attend it. More people came to the talk by Stephen Hirtenstein after the meeting. The next symposium will be held in Oxford in March 2016, on Light and Knowledge.

The Chairman read a report from the Society in the USA, by Nick Yiangou and Jane Carroll, which focused on the October 2015 symposium in New York. It was on the same theme as those in Murcia and Oxford, celebrating the legacy of Ibn ‘Arabi in the year of the 850th anniversary of his birth. The symposium was organised in partnership with the Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life at Columbia University.

Cecilia Twinch gave an account of the extraordinary succession of symposia and events involving MIAS-Latina, an independent sister organisation of the Muhyyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society. MIAS-Latina is based in Murcia, the birthplace of Ibn ‘Arabi, and has organised symposia there since 2011. In the year from October 2014, they organised or participated in nearly one event per month, extending beyond Murcia to Barcelona, Madrid, Seville, Valencia, Granada, Lisbon in Portugal, and by video-link to Mexico. MIAS-Latina also produced the second and very substantial volume of its journal El Azufre Rojo (The Red Sulphur).

Martin Notcutt presented the Treasurer’s Report. The facts and figures underline how the Society is funded by the membership, and how it works through time freely given by those who value what Muhyyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi represents.

Finally the Chairman welcomed the election of Bernard Sartorius from Switzerland as Fellows Representative for 2016, and introduced him to the meeting.
Archiving Report 2015

Two visits to Turkey

A report by Stephen Hirtenstein

In spring, I made two visits to Turkey, in April and May, and visited four separate libraries in Istanbul. These visits were made possible by the response of members to a request for donations earlier in 2015. Overall, many manuscripts were catalogued and digitised, and just over £800 (approximately one-third of the total cost of the visits) was spent on CD digital images.

Libraries visited:
- Süleymaniye
- Istanbul University
- Beyazid
- Topkapi

Some of the libraries operate an open-door policy with digital copies immediately available, while others require much form-filling and patience to gain entry and a lengthy application process to get a digital copy made. The Süleymaniye library is still operating efficiently despite the reading room having been moved to a much smaller office with a separate entrance – everything is available on computer, both catalogue and manuscripts, and ordering a CD is now made even easier through the use of a card-machine to take payment on the spot.

Apart from various Dīwān mss, which are being collected as part of an ongoing project to reconstruct Ibn ʿArabi’s poetic corpus, and an early copy of Mawāqiʿ al-nujūm (dated 676H and owned by al-Qāsim al-Birzālī, a member of an important Damascene family), the major highlight was:

*Ijāz al-bayān fī tarjama ʿan al-Qurʾān* (RG 268)

- an undated copy, which is the first one of this work in the Archive.
- 180 folios; commentary on the Qurʾān up to Q 2:253.
- text printed by M. M. Ghurab as *Raḥma min al-Raḥmān* (Damascus, 1979/1401).
- there appears to be an original copy in Baghdad, said to be in Ibn ʿArabi’s hand with an authorised transmission (riwāya) to Ismāʿīl Ibn Sawdakīn and dated 622H, but we have no means of accessing this at present.

The University library has a more cumbersome application and data recording system, and I had less time there than I wanted: the library has some manuscripts digitised and there is no printed catalogue – the only way to find out what manuscripts they hold is by means of a card index system in tiny handwritten Arabic.

As for the third library, the Beyazid, it is no longer in the building it used to occupy some years ago. Remarkably, despite the fact that it is officially closed for some months as part of a restoration programme, I managed to meet the director and get a CD of a few manuscripts. Highlights included early copies of *ʿAnqāʾ Mughrib* (dated 707H) and
al-Qūnawī’s *Fukūk* (dated 700H).

For the second visit I was able to obtain permission to enter the Topkapi Palace Library to view a particularly interesting manuscript, and then obtain a digital copy:

*Muhāḍarat al-abrār wa musāmarāt al-akhyār* (RG 493)

- dated 712H (by far the earliest copy known, since other copies are post-933, after the conquest of Syria and Egypt by Selim I).
- one of the longest works without any critical edition, but printed in two volumes in Beirut – through our acquisition of this copy, work has now begun in Spain on a new edition.

It only remains to express our deepest gratitude to all those who responded so generously to the archiving appeal: through this support we have been able to go on working in these treasure-trove libraries, and building up this incredible resource and encouraging new scholarship. Thank you so much.

### Other Archiving Activities

*A report by Jane Clark*

#### A) Manuscript Acquisition

Apart from Stephen’s trip in April, manuscript collection has happened by other means. Julian Cook also made a visit to the Süleymaniye in Istanbul during a privately financed research trip and obtained a miscellany of digital copies, mostly concerned with specific research projects being undertaken.

Julian has done much research into on-line catalogues of mss from all over the world in the past couple of years, and this has yielded some valuable new information. Most of the new mss which Stephen gathered from Turkey for instance, have been found in this way, having been missed out in the previous bibliography put together by Osman Yahya (*Histoire et Classification de l’Œuvre d’Ibn ʿArabī*, Damascus, 1964).

He has also unearthed mss close to home, and found a number of very significant early texts in the British Library, which allowed him to take photographic copies with his i-pad.

**Highlights include:**

- Or 6242 – *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* (probably pre- 707H, corrected against the autograph, i.e. Evkaf 1933).
- Or 6324 (parts) 7th-century copy of *Futūḥāt* Chapter 560 in the 1st recension.
- Or 9632 – a collection of three works (‘Anqā’, *Natāʾij al-adhkar*, *Ishārāt al-Qurʾān*) written in Aleppo in 636H – i.e. within Ibn ‘Arabī’s lifetime – which are amongst the oldest copies of the works. In fact, this ms authenticates *Natāʾij al-adhkar*.

He is now in negotiation with the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, try-
Since 2002 the Society has been supporting visits to Turkish libraries by its researchers to identify and collect copies of historic manuscripts connected with Ibn ‘Arabi. The first thought was to ensure the preservation of these documents. It has acquired over 900 digital copies of manuscripts of works by Ibn ‘Arabi. The catalogue of manuscripts has been made available to scholars through the Society’s Archive Project website, and to a wider audience on the general Society website. The Archive Project has been made possible by donations from members and grants received from TIMA, The Islamic Manuscript Association.

One of the triggers for starting the Archive Project was the appearance of an Ibn ‘Arabi manuscript in a London auction. Two members of the Society noticed the similarity of the manuscript to one illustrated in Stephen Hirtenstein’s biography of Ibn ‘Arabi, ‘The Unlimited Mercifier’, and it emerged that this manuscript was stolen from the Yusuf Aga Library in Konya, Turkey. It was one of 103 Seljuk-era manuscripts, seven rare printed books and 63 golden inlaid covers stolen from the Library in 2000. The Society was able to prove that this one was a stolen manuscript by means of a microfilm copy that it had. The sale was stopped, and the manuscript itself was returned to the Library in 2003.

As recently as July 2015 it was reported that a Turkish Ph.D student at Utrecht University identified two further manuscripts from the Yusuf Aga theft in a collection in the University of Pennsylvania’s Rare Books and Manuscripts Library, and these have also been returned to Konya.

Straightforward preservation of historic manuscripts remains a role of the Archive, but its collection of digital copies of manuscripts has become a foundation for refinement of the catalogue of Ibn ‘Arabi’s works, and critical editions and translations prepared on a much sounder basis.
Abral Ahmad of the Ibn ‘Arabī Foundation in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, has made some very valuable contributions, feeding back information from the manuscripts that he has been editing. There has also been much input from Julian himself and from Claude Addas about various aspects pertaining to manuscripts’ validity, etc. Some really important and extensive research has taken place, largely held in the comment fields of the on-line database.

Highlights include:

- Julian’s expertise in Ibn ‘Arabī’s poetry now enables him to correlate many of the odd poems which appear at the end, or in the margins, of mss, with the Diwān. This is an enormous help in working out whether a work is really by Ibn ‘Arabī, or which work it is.

- Julian and Claude Addas together have worked out a number of ‘markers’ which allow us to work out whether a copy of the Futūḥāt is a first or second recension.

- Research, undertaken generally, into the people who are named on the manuscripts. It is possible that there will at some point be an extension of the database to encapsulate the expertise which is being developed in this area; already Julian has made available in the catalogue a searchable list of the many people who appear in readings during Ibn ‘Arabī’s last years in Damascus.

- Ongoing research, led by Stephen, into Ibn ‘Arabī’s handwriting on the manuscripts he wrote out himself, allowing us to determine the provenance of these mss much more precisely.

- In general, work into sorting out all sorts of little problems of attribution that were not possible to solve at the time of the original bibliography produced by Osman Yahya.

One fruit of all the work is some slight amendment to what we understand Ibn ‘Arabī’s corpus of works to be:

- Verified 86
- Probable 11

Total works written by Ibn ‘Arabī = 97 on the basis of current manuscript evidence

This number was 95 when Stephen and I wrote our article in JMIAS a few years ago, so recent research has added two to the total corpus. This change is not just the addition of two manuscripts, but has involved several works being demoted from verified status and several being added, changes in classification as we find that some works are actually extracts from others, etc.

The system for updating the on-line database – and subsequently the PDF lists – is cumbersome. It is uploaded periodically from the foundational database, which means that it requires my input in order to feed the information that appears in the comments fields into the database. The amendment process is fascinating but very time-consuming work, and I spent most of my summer going through about 3,500 comments which have accumulated over the last few years. We hoped to get this done by now, but I had not quite finished when my vacation came to an end, so it will be delayed until early 2016.
In the long-term, therefore, the plan is that two foundational catalogues will become one, so that we will be able to amend the on-line catalogue directly. This is rather a large project, which Julian has generously agreed to undertake. When it is done, further possibilities will open up for making the catalogue more widely available, or for bringing in other people to update it. Hopefully this will happen before too long—certainly before next year.

The main problem we now have is dissemination. As I have said, the archiving catalogue now contains a great deal of very valuable research, but it is in note form in the comments field. Somehow or other, we have to start converting all this knowledge into articles so that it can be widely known.

C) Critical Editions, etc

Finally, there has not been much progress this year on the work of producing critical editions of the Arabic texts, which is a project we hoped to launch and discussed a couple of years ago. It seems pretty clear that at the moment we simply don’t have the resources to do this ourselves and we are on the lookout for a publishing partner who might want to do this in co-operation with us.

But in the meantime we continue to lend copies of the mss to members of the Society who want to do research or editing of mss. I have already mentioned Abrar Ahmed in Pakistan, who has done so much good work in this field. I should also mention Maurizio Marconi, a member of the Society in Italy, who has produced a translation of K. al-Ajwiba into Italian using original sources in the archive. And Pablo Beneito at the University of Murcia, the co-ordinator of MIAS Latina in Spain, who has recently started to supervise a couple of scholars in producing new critical editions based on archive mss. One is an Egyptian academic, Anwaar Moustafa of the University of Cairo, who is working on a very much needed new version of Tarjumān al-ashwāq, and the other is a post-graduate student working in Barcelona, under the direct supervision of Jaume Flaquer, on the Muhadarat al-abrār, thus making immediate use of what is probably the most exciting manuscript find of 2015, as Stephen’s report has explained.

Last but not least, can I re-iterate thanks to all those who have supported the library and archive over the past year, whether by sending us books and information, inputting onto the database catalogue, giving financial support to manuscript collection or undertaking research and editing. It is hugely appreciated.

The MIAS Journal

Report by David Hornsby

Since its inception in 1984 the Journal has developed from a small traditional-looking annual volume of 66-75 pages into a full-fledged biennial production, with each volume running to 110-140 pages (i.e. approx. 220-260 pages p.a.). It is now a professional, specialist, privately produced journal that is regarded as one of the best of its kind in the field.

The Journal is now produced by print-on-demand, which means printing the number we need for members and subscribers, plus a few extra copies, so only a small amount of stock is held.
The overall print run worldwide is about 430 copies, of which some 320 are sent out immediately to members and subscribers. Print production costs alone are about £5 per copy, excluding postage costs. As per the last journal, approximately 300 copies are printed in the UK, of which some 220 are sent out; in the USA 135 printed and 90-100 sent out.

Up to now JMIAS has essentially been run as a private journal for members and fellows of the Society, with around 40 institutional members such as university libraries. A listing of JMIAS contents is on the MIAS website, with some articles being selected to be made available for reading online. There is an argument for making the whole of earlier JMIAS issues available, especially if our aim is to encourage articles to be read and made use of, but we have not yet come to a general agreement to do this major project. We are considering with Martin Notcutt what if any the implications are for the website.

We are investigating whether in future an e-Journal will be the right format for the Journal and how best to balance the continuity of the paper format with the emergence of the new e-formats. We are going to try out various e-pub formats including Kindle, and “test the waters”. There may even be advantages to an e-version? Searchable, transportable, accessible anywhere... hence preferred by many younger people... But we also need to beware the complications of piracy...

We have put ourselves forward to JSTOR, a digital library of academic journals, books and primary sources, and are investigating other methods of increasing distribution of JMIAS to universities.

Staff

As part of an increasing professionalisation, several trained staff have become involved, and many have honed their skills in the context of JMIAS. JMIAS is a specialist journal in terms of content, special characters in transliteration, in addition to the normal process of editing etc. Current staff to whom great thanks is due as many/most work entirely gratis or almost entirely gratis are:

- Editor-in-chief – Stephen Hirtenstein
- Managing editor – David Hornsby
- Production editor – Michael Tiernan
- Reviews editor – Cyrus Ali Zargar
- Copyediting – Judy Kearns-Waddington
- Proofreading – Rosemary Brass
- Art Editor - Hiroko Nagato-Apthorp

We get important help from Alan Boorman as a translator from French. We are also beginning to train up interested and proficient new personnel: Anne Clark (copyediting), Joseph Robertson, Said Hassan and Jerome Warlow (copyediting/proofreading), not all of whom are able to work for nothing.

JMIAS is ultimately a huge resource for MIAS – and one that we hope to utilise to encourage membership more widely. An e-version is one of the most effective ways of encouraging readership and perhaps this will lead to an increase in membership? So we are looking for wider distribution among non-members by creating an electronic edition of the Society’s Journal going forward, alongside the paper version.
The Library

Report by Jane Clark

It has become usual to do a presentation of new books as part of the AGM, and in the past I have arrived with a whole suitcase of them. However, there are not many books to announce this year. Here is a list of the most important ones that I am aware of:

1. ‘Anqā’ s new translation of Ibn ʿArabī’s *K. al-Isfār* entitled *The Secrets of Voyaging*. This is a dual language edition, with a critical edition of the Arabic text displayed alongside a translation into English by Angela Jaffray, supported by a whole host of notes and commentary.

2. A new translation of *Fuṣūṣ al-Hikam* (Routledge, London and New York, 2015) by Professor Binyamin Abrahamov, which is a welcome addition to the growing number of translations into English. It is perhaps the clearest in English so far, but, although it says that it is an “annotated” translation, you should be warned that the notes are nothing like as comprehensive as those made by Caner Dağlı in his 2004 translation.

Professor Abrahamov is a lecturer in the Dept of Arabic at Bar-Ilan University in Israel, and a friend of the Society and Ibn ‘Arabī, having published several articles in the Journal. Some of you may know his previous book, *Ibn ʿArabī and the Sufis*, which was published last year by ‘Anqā’ and gathers together Ibn ʿArabī’s comments about earlier Sufi masters such as al-Junayd, al-Ghazālī, Ibn Barrajan, ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī, etc.


4. A new book by Claude Addas in French called *La Maison muhammadienne – Apercus de la dévotion au Prophète en mystique musulmane* (*The Muhammadan House – concerning devotion to the Prophet in Islamic mysticism*), Editions Gallimard, Paris, 2015, which deals with this important subject in the work of Ibn ʿArabī as well as other writers.

5. In Arabic, we have received three new critical editions from the Ibn ʿArabī Foundation in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, who have used material from the MIAS archive to produce new Arabic critical texts alongside an Urdu translation.
   - a new critical edition of *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam*

There are a number of important new books that we know are in the pipeline, so we look forward to a rich 2016.
Young Writer Award

Report by Jane Clark

We are pleased to announce that the next Young Writer Award will be made in 2016. This tri-annual award offers a prize of US$ 1,000 for an essay by a writer under the age of 35 on a subject related to the thought of Ibn ʿArabī 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 ʿArabī Society for consideration. There is no guarantee that an essay will be accepted, but for previous awards, not only the winners but also other entries have been published.

Entries much be received before 1st October 2016 and the winner will be announced at the AGM next November. Essays can be sent digitally to mias.uk@ibnarabisociety.org, but they need to be accompanied by an entry form which can be downloaded from the Society website or obtained by email request.

We have received some excellent entries for this Award on the two previous occasions when it has been run, and we are very concerned that its existence is known by as many people as possible. So we would like to ask members to pass on information about it to anyone they think may be interested, and there will be posters available if anyone wants to put one up on a notice board somewhere.

This award is supported by a private donation and, once again, by the Beshara Trust, as well as drawing upon Society funds. Our thanks to all those who have contributed.

For further information, please email me, Jane Clark, on jane.clark@gathorne.co.uk, or consult the website.

The winner of the Young Writer Award in 2013 was Axel Takács, for his essay “Beyond the Intellect: Perpetual Expansion and Transformation in the Anthropocosmic Vision of Thomas Gallus and the Akbarian Tradition.” Axel was part of the doctoral program in religion at Harvard University, where he also received a Masters of Theological Studies in 2010. The essay appeared in Vol. 55 of the Journal, 2014.

The Award in 2009 was won by Dr. Jari Kaukua, for his paper “I in the Eye of God: Ibn ʿArabi on the Divine Human Self.” He was an Academy of Finland research fellow at the University of Jyväskylä, in the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy. He came from Finland to present his paper at the Society AGM in 2009, and it appeared in Vol. 47 of the Journal, 2010.

If you know somebody who might be interested in entering an essay for the Award, please draw it to their attention.

The Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi Society

Young Writer Award 2016

An award of US$ 1,000 for an unpublished essay concerning the teachings of Muhyiddin Ibn ʿArabi by an author under the age of 35.

Deadline for entries: 1st October 2016

Criteria for entry:

- The author must be under the age of 35 on 31st December 2016 (i.e. born on or after 1st October 1981).
- The essay must be in English, and not more than 9000 words in length (excluding any notes, references, bibliography and summary).

Part of the poster inviting entries for the Young Writer Award
UK Symposium and Events

Report by Richard Twinch

In keeping with the magnitude of the 850th anniversary of the birth of the illustrious Muhyiddin, events have been taking place around the world.

Here in the UK, we gathered again in St. Anne’s College at the end of May to discuss the title ‘A Living Legacy: Ibn ‘Arabi in Today’s World’. Our wide range of international speakers were:

- Sou’ad Hakim – Beirut: A Living Legacy
- Mahmud Kılıç – Istanbul: If You Meet Ibn ‘Arabi in Damascus...
- Mohammed Rustom – Toronto: Akbarian Aphorisms for the 21st Century
- Sa’diyya Shaikh – Cape Town: Intimate Echoes of Self: Gender And Sexuality in Ibn ‘Arabi’s Cosmology
- Cecilia Twinch – Oxford: Refreshing Repose and a Reviving Scent

Some 88 delegates attended the Oxford symposium where we also showed the film ‘Looking for Muhyiddin’ in the afternoon and evening – the second public showing in the UK, in the city where the initial scenes were shot during the 2008 Symposium at Worcester College.

The UK Society AGM for 2015 was held in London at the end of November. This was the first time the AGM had been held in London for over 30 years, and the event, which included a talk by Stephen Hirtenstein, was well attended by over 60 people, which is a measure of the prominence that Ibn ‘Arabi’s work is having upon a new, predominantly urban, generation.

2015 has also seen the publication of Angela Jaffray’s translation of the Kitab al-Isfar and published by Anqa Books as ‘The Secrets of Voyaging’. This formed the basis of the talk given after the AGM by Stephen Hirtenstein who edited the publication for Anqa Books.

On March 19th, 2016 in Wolfson College, Oxford we are holding a one-day symposium on ‘Ibn ‘Arabi – Light and Knowledge’ with speakers Todd Lawson, Sara Svir and Ahmad Sukkar. It is serendipitous that this event should take place as the sun passes through the equinox which is widely celebrated as the Night of Norooz which is the Iranian New Year on 20th March.

The change of venue, with ample parking and proximity to a new rail station, will hopefully allow many to make the journey from London. By including lunch for all as part of the event, it will also make for the even further integration of the symposium. We are holding our talks in the brand new, award-winning Leonard Wolfson Auditorium which can accommodate up to 150 people.

We are also linking up with MIAS Latina and Anqa Books to arrange the one day symposium in English in Murcia on May 27th and we hope that weekenders will come, as they did in 2014, and join the symposium as well as those on the full Anqa Tour.
The Ibn ‘Arabi Society in America has recently returned from the Symposium in New York held on October 23-24th on the same theme as those in Murcia and Oxford, celebrating the legacy of Ibn ‘Arabi in the year of the 850th anniversary of his birth. The event was a great success and we continue to have a strong presence and good support in the New York area.

Prof. William Chittick delivered the keynote lecture on the Friday night on knowledge and recognition, the living knowledge which is Ibn ‘Arabi’s legacy. The evening finished with a beautiful concert by Amir Vahab and his group. On Saturday morning there were excellent talks by James Morris on inspiration and discernment, Sa’diyya Shaikh on re-imagining gender, Todd Lawson on friendship, Pierre Lory on the animal world and Zahra’ Langhi on peace. All of the talks were recorded, the first is on the web site as a podcast and the others are to follow. Each of the speakers as well as Jane Clark and Axel Takacs (from Boston College) led workshops in the afternoon. The event finished with a challenging panel discussion.

As in previous years, we found a partner, in this case the Institute for Religion, Culture and Public Life at Columbia University which was of great help logistically, financially and with outreach. The Institute covered the cost of the venues, audio equipment and refreshments and advertised well throughout the University such that we had a number of students attending the event, which is always important to us. The New York Open Center, a previous partner of ours, also helped with publicity. Reporters from Anadolu, the official Turkish government news agency and South-South News from the United Nations attended and we are waiting to hear of their reports.

Registration was handled by Eventbrite and book sales by Square both of which made accounting much more simple and Nick sent out a questionnaire after the event which solicited some helpful, and mostly very appreciative, responses.

Other than the Symposium, the Society has started a programme of afternoon events in Berkeley, California. The first, with Jane Carroll and Nick Yiangou presenting the papers they had delivered for the Beshara Lecture series, was held in July and was both well received (and easy to arrange!). The next event with Bob Darr presenting the paper he delivered at the Oxford Symposium in 2015 was held in December. We potentially have Angela Jaffray and Todd Lawson lined up for the spring and hope to hold at least two more events before the end of 2016.

There are currently 93 members and 996 people on the mailing list. The US Facebook page has 2250 “likes”. Maren Gleason continues to handle book sales which are steady throughout the year.

The US Society’s finances are self-sustaining through membership dues, donations, book sales and occasional grants. As in the UK none of this would be possible without the free labour of the Society’s board members.

The Symposia recently have been managed by partnering with suitable organisations to share the costs and for the past few years have not operated at a loss to the Society.
The Society’s coffers are healthy, thanks in part to a generous donation from the Adobe Foundation through Nick Yiangou’s employer Adobe Systems.

Exhausting though all this is we look forward to next year!

MIAS-Latina 2015
Report by Cecilia Twinch

MIAS-Latina is an independent sister organization for Spanish speakers, as well as Catalan, Portuguese and Italian speakers.

2014–2015 was the 850th Anniversary of Ibn ‘Arabi’s birth, and was celebrated in Spain through an astonishing number of symposia, seminars and workshops as well as film screenings, dance performances, art exhibitions, cultural visits, book launches, concerts and poetry readings.

There was nearly one symposium per month:

MIAS-Latina’s 850 Anniversary celebrations began in Murcia in October 2014, with a two-day symposium entitled The Secrets of Journeying, the first MIAS-Latina symposium to be held entirely in English. The symposium took place at the beginning of the Anqa Publishing Tour of Andalusia: ‘Following in the footsteps of Ibn ‘Arabi’ which also for the first time started in Murcia, where Ibn ‘Arabi was born. It was open to the general public and some delegates travelled from abroad just for the weekend.

After the symposium, Richard and I stayed on in Murcia for a couple of months and were pleased to be able to join some of the burgeoning Ibn ‘Arabi Reading Circles sessions in Cartagena and Murcia, and in November 2014 I was also able to give a Weekend Seminar, in Spanish, entitled Ibn ‘Arabi : The Journey of Transformation (El viaje de transformación).

There were a lot of firsts in Spain in the last year:

In January 2015, there was the First International Symposium of MIAS-Latina in Barcelona: Ibn ‘Arabi in dialogue with thought and the arts.

In February and also in May 2015 in Madrid there were talks and other events at the Arab House (a meeting point between Spain and the Arab World) organized by MIAS-Latina.

In March 2015 I was fortunate to be able to take part in the First International Symposium of MIAS-Latina in Seville: entitled Spiritual Geometry in Ibn ‘Arabi which took place in the University – once the Royal Tobacco Factory of Bizet’s Carmen fame. As a prelude to this symposium, there had already been a series of lectures on Ibn ‘Arabi and Philosophy at the university during January and February. And I should reiterate that despite being held in the university, this symposium, like most of the Spanish conferences, included films, music, art exhibitions and cultural visits as well as the talks.

In April and also June in Valencia there were Weekend Seminars on An Initiation into Reading Ibn ‘Arabi with Pablo Beneito and Fernando
Mora. Fernando Mora is the author of an excellent introduction to Ibn ‘Arabi’s life and thought entitled Ibn ‘Arabī: Vida y enseñanzas del gran místico andalusí.

In May in Murcia there was a weekend symposium which for the first time this year was planned to coincide with the Festival of Three Cultures rather than with IBAFF (the International Ibn ‘Arabi Film Festival) which took place as usual in Murcia in March. That March conference was moved to Seville University simply because the Cultural Centre for Murcia did not have enough resources to put on two major Ibn ‘Arabi symposia within a couple of months of each other, in addition to the Film Festival. This Fifth MIAS-Latina International Symposium on Ibn ‘Arabi of Murcia was entitled: A Living Legacy: 100 years of Ibn ‘Arabi Studies – A Tribute to Miguel Asín Palacios.

As you may know, Miguel Asín Palacios, the Roman Catholic Priest and scholar of Islamic studies, was the pioneer of Ibn ‘Arabi studies in western European languages, publishing studies over more than three decades. He wrote Muhyiddin, a Moslem Writer of the twelfth century (Mohidin, escritor musulmán del siglo XII) in 1899, and Psychology according to Mohidin Abenarabi (La psicología según Mohidin Abenarabi) in 1906, as well as his better known Muslim Eschatology in Dante’s Divine Comedy (La escatología musulmana en la ‘Divina Comedia’,1919) and his Study of Sufism through Ibn ‘Arabi’s works: El Islam Cristianizado published in 1931, which included several translations of Ibn ‘Arabi texts into Spanish, as well as various other works.

In May in Granada there was a weekend seminar on Sufism and the arts in the light of the Alhambra, it being the United Nations International Year of Light 2015. This was held of course at the Alhambra and enjoyed the participation of Jane Carroll, architect and geometer, who is one of the mainstays of MIAS USA.

Then after the summer break, in October, in Madrid again, there was the International Seminar on Ibn ‘Arabi and (Ramón) Llull in the light of current maths and physics.

Beyond Spain, MIAS-Latina has participated in events in Portugal and Mexico:

Portugal: There was a conference entitled O Gharb al-Andalus nas raíces do misticismo de Ibn al-‘Arabî at Lisbon University (Universidade Nova de Lisboa) in April, and in November the International Conference Ibn ‘Arabi: between the East and the West of al-Andalus, and the impact of his teaching in the 21st Century with old friends of this society like Eric Geoffroy, Jaafar Kansousi and Jaume Flaquer.

Mexico: Several videolink talks have been given to the Ibn ‘Arabi Reading Circle in Mexico City.

These were followed in November 2015 in Murcia, Spain, by the First International Meeting of Ibn ‘Arabi Reading Circles from Murcia, Cartagena, Sevilla, Talavera, Valencia, Melilla, Barcelona and Granada under the title: From the text to the heart which included, among its 14 talks, a videolink presentation by Ariosto Matus of the Mexican Reading Circle.

On 4-5 December, 2015, the Second MIAS Latina Symposium took place in Barcelona: Affinities between the mystic Ramon Llull and Ibn ‘Arabi against the background of Mediterranean thought at the Centre for Christian Studies – including a screening of the documentary made by Miguel Valls, Ibn ‘Arabi and the Splendour of al-Andalus.
I would also like to announce that the next Anqa Publishing tour, to be led again by Stephen Hirtenstein and Jane Carroll, will take place 26 May – 9 June 2016 and will again start with a symposium in Murcia. This three day International symposium on Ibn ‘Arabi, entitled Presence, will take place within the framework of the Festival of Three Cultures, beginning with one all-day conference entirely in English on 27th May. Those not taking part in the Anqa tour are also most welcome to attend this symposium held in the place of Ibn ‘Arabi’s birth. (The talks and workshops on 28th and 29th of May will be in Spanish with possible contributions in Portuguese and Italian.) See the Anqa and MIAS-Latina websites for more details.


Details of other upcoming events may be seen on MIAS-Latina’s website: ibnarabisociety.es

Besides Spanish, some parts of the website, including many articles, are available in Catalan, Portuguese and Italian by clicking on the appropriate flag at the top of the page.

Pablo Beneito has again been the main inspiration and academic director of all of these events. However, there is also now a small but growing dedicated group of helpers, in the region of Murcia and elsewhere, who work with the support of Puertas de Castilla Cultural Organization in Murcia, as well as universities and other cultural organizations there and elsewhere. Of course, Ibn ‘Arabi is recognized, and becoming more so, as part of Spain’s heritage. Perhaps he will come to be seen more as part of humanity’s heritage, especially in these difficult times when his inclusive wisdom is so much needed.

San Salvador Church in Seville which still has the remains of the arches at the Great Mosque where Ibn ‘Arabi would have prayed.
The Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society was founded in the United Kingdom in 1977. The intention was to make Ibn ‘Arabi’s meanings and writings better known and understood. The Society in the USA was established in 1983 as a non-profit corporation in California. Although they are distinct legal and financial entities, the Society in the UK and the USA act as one body. The Society’s activities are funded by the annual subscriptions and donations of its members. The Society in the USA is responsible for members in North and Central America, the Society in the UK administers members in all other countries, 36 countries at this time. MIAS-Latina, an independent organisation in Spain, was established in 2011.

The Honorary Fellows of the Society have included many of the outstanding scholars in this field, from Henry Corbin and Osman Yahya onwards.

The Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabi Society has been published in the United Kingdom since 1982, so far making available some 300 articles and translations, many book reviews, and poems by Ibn ‘Arabi. The Journal is received by members of the Society, and is subscribed to by about 40 university libraries and similar institutions. We look forward to it also becoming available as an electronic publication. Since 2010 the Society has sponsored a Young Writer Award for an original essay by a person under 35, which is now a triennial event.

The Society is the co-publisher of the four-volume translation of the Fusuṣ al-Hikam (1986-1991), together with the unique commentary in Ottoman Turkish, rendered into English by Bulent Rauf. It published the Arabic text and transliterations of two books of Ibn ‘Arabi’s prayers in 1979 and 1981. In 1993 it published a Commemorative Volume of essays with a very wide range of contributors, to mark the 750th anniversary of the death of Ibn ‘Arabi. It has collaborated with Anqa Publications in the production of some works. The Society has been part of the great increase in the number of works published in English in the past four decades. At the time when it began, there were literally a handful of titles available in English. The Society’s library now contains works relating to Ibn ‘Arabi in

Treasurer’s Report 2015

Report by Martin Notcutt

Thank God, the Society has been given money to do a lot of things. The money which really keeps the Society going comes from its members in the form of annual subscriptions, and sometimes special donations. The Society remains a voluntary body. That means most of what is done in its name is given freely, and the money it gets pays for things and outside services.

These notes describe the finances of the Society in the United Kingdom, which administers the membership of the Society in about 36 countries round the world, except for North and Central America. Being carefully used, the money enables the following things:

- Production of the Journal, printing and posting, costs at present about £4,500 per year for two volumes of the Journal.
- Running the Symposium, and paying for insurance, comes to about £14,000 for a two-day symposium with six speakers, most of them from outside the UK. The Symposium sets Registration fees with the intention of breaking even, but always costs more to run than it recovers in registrations. Rather than a loss let us call it a kind of investment.
- Running the website, which is a rich resource of articles related to Ibn ‘Arabi (more than 200), and podcasts (more than 100). In one month, nearly 7000 people visit the website.
- Helping fund the Young Writer Award of US $1000, to encourage new people to write, and to make them heard.
- From time to time the Society reprints books such as the Wird and the Hizbu-l wiqayah.
- Providing a context for the Archive Project, which involves visits to collections in Turkey and elsewhere, the purchase of digital copies of manuscripts, database development and maintenance. Most of the funding of the Archive project is now outside the Society’s regular expenditure. It has received generous grants from The Islamic Manuscript Association, and donations from members, most recently in 2015, to enable a research visit to Turkey.
- There are other occasional events, such as the showing of the film ‘Looking for Muhyiddin’ in London at the end of 2014. This cost and brought in approximately £2500.
- Buying occasional bits of equipment such as computers, audio and video recorders. A computer enables the secretary to respond to enquiries from all over the world and to run a small bookshop. Another computer allows the Archive project to develop a database. A digital recorder plays a part in the now more than 100 podcasts available online, and a video camera is used to make films of talks at Symposia which then go to YouTube.
- Purchasing books for resale; packaging and postage of books, back issues of Journal. Profits from the sale of books are useful income for the Society.
- Putting on the AGM.
In 2014 and 2015 the total expenditure through the Society’s books was over £20,000.

In the light of this, it may surprise you to know that, since the main source of spendable money for the Society is the money it receives from members as annual subscriptions, over the past five years this has been between £5,000 and £6,000 per year.

In 2015, however, because of particular needs, there was an appeal to members for help in funding the Archive project and the Symposium, and altogether donations and grants came to £7,745 – nearly half as much again as membership income.

Another regular source of income is profit from the sale of books, which may produce £1,500 per year. These days most books are sold at the Symposium, but there are also sales of the Fusus al-Hikam and full sets of the Journal.

The Society has some cash in the bank. Some of that cash can be considered as already committed. Some of it is working capital. “Already committed” means things like money to pay for production of those journals people or universities have already paid subscriptions for, and funds received for the Archive project which have not already been spent. Saving to reprint Hizb, Wird. We now also contribute to the Young Writer Award, which has been fully sponsored up to now.

The rest is “Working capital”, and is what makes it possible to put on a Symposium, for example, when you have expenses such as book-ings and airfares to pay before you have any income. If you don’t have this sort of money in the bank, you would have to borrow, and we are not able to borrow from a bank.

What I would like to leave you with is that the Society’s income from subscriptions, and on special occasions donations, goes a long way. It does this because the Society receives as gift the efforts of many people who love what the Society is there to serve. If it were necessary to pay for what these efforts produce, ten times the present income would not be enough.

But as time goes by,

- Things like the Symposium are getting more expensive, and our aspirations have been creeping up for both the Journal and the Symposium.
- The Society’s income from Membership is pretty much the same year by year.
- The number of people who want to (and can afford to) give their time for nothing may be dwindling.

I would encourage more people to become involved in the Society as members, helping to fund it, and as contributors to the work it does. The value of the gift represented by the meaning and works of Ibn ‘Arabi is incalculable. It seems more than ever important that it is available to those who find themselves in need.

The Society has had a website since 1996. Apart from news about events, the website has rich content, making available more than 200 articles and 100 podcasts. About 300 people visit the website each day. Podcasts have been available through iTunes as well as the Society’s website since 2009. The Society in the USA has had a Facebook page since 2011, and the Society in the UK has had a Facebook group since 2014. Videos have been published on Youtube since 2014.

Since 2002 the Society has been supporting visits to Turkish libraries by its researchers to identify and collect copies of historic manuscripts connected with Ibn ‘Arabi. The first thought was to ensure the preservation of these documents. It has acquired over 900 digital copies of manuscripts of works by Ibn ‘Arabi. The catalogue of manuscripts has been made available to scholars through the Society’s Archive Project website, and to a wider audience on the general Society website. The Archive Project has been made possible by donations from members and has received grants from TIMA, The Islamic Manuscript Association.

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The catalogue of manuscripts has been the basis for the first revision of the catalogue of works by Ibn ‘Arabi since the seminal study by Osman Yahya, published in 1964. The resources of the Archive Project have helped many scholars in their work of producing critical editions and translations of Ibn ‘Arabi’s works, and for groundbreaking work in elucidating the structure of Ibn ‘Arabi’s Diwan.