

Current Perspectives on Ibn 'Arabī and 'Akbarī' Thought

UCLouvain — Belgium
June 24-25, 2019

Keynotes:

Claude Addas — *La 'voie radiieuse' : Ibn 'Arabī, la Loi et son interprétation*
Denis Gril — *Unité et dualité dans le commentaire de la Fātiḥa (Futūḥāt, Chap. 5)*
James W. Morris — *Taḥqīq ('Realization') and the Formation of a Global Civilization*

Participants:

José Bellver — *I'tibārism and Early Shūdhīyya: Two Intellectual Ṣūfī Trends in al-Andalus and the Maghrib on the Eve of Ibn 'Arabī*
Nicholas Boylston — *Quranic Exegesis at the Meeting Between Twelver Shi'ism and Akbarian Thought: Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmulī's Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-A'zam*
Stephen Hirtenstein — *Views from the Home Front: manuscript preservation and the MIAS archiving project*
Giovanni Maria Martini — *Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī (d. 810/1407) as a Key Agent in the Transmission of Akbarī Silsilas*
Michele Petrone — *Saturn in Ibn 'Arabī's Cosmological views. A Preliminary Inquiry*
Ali Reza Pharaa — *Realization without Intention, witnessing beyond understanding: The work of beauty and ibn Arabi's Station of no Station*
Sophie Tyser — *Between Revealed and Non-Revealed Knowledge: Ibn 'Arabī's Representation of Man as a Microcosm in the Light of its Intellectual Context*
Gregory Vandamme — *'The most perfect knowledge' : Ibn 'Arabī's Epistemology of ḥayra (Perplexity)*
Cornelis van Lit — *Reading the Commentary Tradition on Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam Digitally: Preliminary Results, Desired Prospects*

Organisers:

Cécile Bonmariage | Gregory Vandamme
(F.R.S.-FNRS — ISP Centre De Wulf-Mansion)

Scientific Committee:

Nicholas Boylston | Raphaël Gély | Michele Petrone | Sophie Tyser

June 24-25, 2019 | 9:30 – 17:30

UCLouvain — Salle du Sénat académique (Halles universitaires, Place de l'Université 1) — Louvain-la-Neuve

Current Perspectives on Ibn ‘Arabī and ‘Akbarī’ Thought

(1st Edition)

The fact that the thought of **Ibn ‘Arabī (560-638/1165-1240)** is at the same time intensely innovative and deeply rooted in the tradition may explain in part why it had such a lasting influence both among followers and detractors. His ideas, as understood by the first generations of those who claimed his heritage, shaped the development of Islamic thought and religious experience in following centuries.

They became – even if this is not always explicitly acknowledged – the common conceptual background of a variety of spiritual movements and textual traditions, in both learned and popular Sufism. At the same time, they have been the focal point of the criticism and condemnations of those who oppose Sufism at large, or problematic aspects of Sufi speculations. These issues concerning the reception of Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas are still ongoing today through new appropriations in discourses in and about Islam.

The aim of this meeting is to bring together confirmed and emerging specialists in order to gain some perspective on the current academic research on Ibn ‘Arabī and “Akbarī” thought and to discuss research directions for the future. It will also bring to light questions arising from the reading and use of Ibn ‘Arabī’s ideas today, taking into account the new approaches and better access to the texts provided by recent tools for textual analysis, and evaluating how our present-day situation shapes our understanding of his works, and conversely, what an informed reading can bring to current re-appropriations and (mis)use.

The questions discussed will be organized around four main axes:

(1) ***Ibn ‘Arabī and his milieu: Between continuities and ruptures***

- What do we know about the Andalusian milieu from which Ibn ‘Arabī emerged?
- Are there clear continuities / ruptures with the thought of the “Sufi” and/or “Mu‘tabirūn” tradition of his time?
- Can we define notable changes in his thought following his journey East?

(2) ***The transmission and reception of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought in the “Akbarī school”***

- What do we know about the transmission of Ibn ‘Arabī’s works and ideas?
- Is it possible to define a set of issues where changes in the formulation or understanding seem to bring crucial transformation of his thought?
- Are there aspects of his thought that have been set aside or lessened?

(3) ***Reading Ibn ‘Arabī today: Ongoing issues and new approaches***

- How to learn from past scholarship: Are there misleading understandings or formulations that should be avoided?
- Are there notions that can be useful for a better reading but that are yet underused?
- What are the new possibilities emerging from recent tools for textual analysis? How to avoid the pitfalls of those approaches?

(4) ***Using Ibn ‘Arabī today: Between inspiration and instrumentalization***

- What are the main interpretations (both by promoters and opponents) and appropriations of Ibn ‘Arabī’s thought and name in contemporary Islam?
- What can historians of ideas, with their contextualized reading of Ibn ‘Arabī’s oeuvre, offer to enrich contemporary discourse? Are there notions or works not yet sufficiently used that should or could be promoted? How to better inform the participants in contemporary debates?
- What is (or should be) the impact of contemporary issues in shaping the research on this corpus?

Conference Programme

Day I — Monday June 24

(9:30 - Welcome)

10:00 - Introduction

10:15 - **Keynote 1 — Denis Gril**

Unité et dualité dans le commentaire de la Fātiḥa (Futūḥāt chap. 5)

(11:15 - Coffee Break)

11:30 - Panel 1 — **Reading Ibn ‘Arabī today: Ongoing issues and new approaches (I)** (Chair: C. Bonmariage)

- Ali Reza Pharaa (Stony Brook) — *Realization without Intention, witnessing beyond understanding: the work of beauty and Ibn ‘Arabī’s ‘Station of no Station’*

- Gregory Vandamme (FNRS-UCLouvain) — *‘The most perfect knowledge’: Ibn ‘Arabī’s epistemology of Perplexity (ḥayra)*

(13:00 - Lunch Break)

14:30 - Panel 2 — **Ibn ‘Arabī and his milieu: Between continuities and ruptures** (Chair : Luca Patrizi)

- José Bellver (UCLouvain) — *I’tibārism and Early Shūdhiyya: Two Intellectual Sufi Trends in al-Andalus and the Maghrib on the Eve of Ibn ‘Arabī*

- Sophie Tyser (EPHE/UniBonn) — *Between Revealed and Non-Revealed Knowledge: Ibn ‘Arabī’s Representation of Man as a Microcosm in the Light of its Intellectual Context*

- Michele Petrone (UCLouvain) — *Saturn in Ibn ‘Arabī’s Cosmological views. A Preliminary Inquiry*

(16:45 - Coffee Break)

17:00 - **General Discussion (I)**

(17:45 - End of Day I)

Day II — Tuesday June 25

(9:30 - Welcome)

10:00 - **Keynote 2** — **Claude Addas**

La 'voie radieuse' : Ibn 'Arabī, la Loi et son interprétation

(11:00 - Coffee Break)

11:15 - Panel 3 — **The transmission and reception of Ibn 'Arabī's thought in the "Akbarī school"** (Chair: Gregory Vandamme)

- Nicholas Boylston (Harvard) — *Quranic Exegesis at the Meeting Between Twelver Shi'ism and Akbarian Thought: Sayyid Ḥaydar Āmuli's Tafsīr al-Muḥīṭ al-A'zam*

- Giovanni Martini (L'Orientale) — *Muḥammad Shīrīn Maghribī (d. 810/1407) as a Key Agent in the Transmission of Akbarian Silsilas*

(12:45 - Lunch Break)

14:15 - Panel 4 — **Reading Ibn 'Arabī today: Ongoing issues and new approaches (II)** (Chair: Sophie Tyser)

- Cornelis van Lit (Utrecht) — *Reading the Commentary Tradition on 'Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam' Digitally: Preliminary Results, Desired Prospects*

- Stephen Hirtenstein (MIAS) — *Views from the Home Front: manuscript preservation and the MIAS archiving project*

(15:45 - Coffee Break)

16:00 - **Keynote 3** — **James W. Morris**

Taḥqīq ('Realization') and the Formation of a Global Civilization

17:00 - **General discussion (II)**

(17:45 - End of the Conference)

Organisers:

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Centre De Wulf-Mansion

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