

LITERARY TRANSLATION FROM ARABIC INTO ENGLISH IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND, 1990-2010

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1 Executive Summary

This report was written at a time when most organisations promoting literature and supporting literary translation across Europe are experiencing cuts to their already inadequate budgets. This presents an immediate threat to literary translation, which depends largely on public and private subsidies. Yet, the need for translation between languages and cultures, particularly between Europe and its neighbouring regions, and in particular the Arab world, has never been greater. It is clear that we need to develop new and innovative approaches to argue the case for the key role of culture, including literary translation, in contributing to intercultural understanding, social cohesion and peaceful coexistence in the wider Euro-Mediterranean region.

1.1 Framework

The report is the result of a study of literary translation into English in the United Kingdom and Ireland from the three major official languages of the South-East Mediterranean region – Arabic, Hebrew and Turkish. It was conducted as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Translation Programme, a cooperation between the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Literature Across Frontiers and Transeuropéennes, and specifically as part of the mapping of translation in the region coordinated by Transeuropéennes throughout 2010 and 2011.

1.2 Method and scope

The study covers the period from 1990 until 2010 and examines the entire context in which literary translation takes place. It is therefore based not only on an assessment of published titles, but on a survey of the whole literary scene, including the culture of live literary events at festivals and venues, the media reception of translated literature, training opportunities and support structures relevant to literary translators, as well as the policies of key arts bodies, and financial support provided by public and private sources. Much of the gathered information comes from relevant websites and printed material (including book reviews and critical articles), as well as from a number of interviews conducted for the report with individual publishers, authors and translators, arts and culture bodies, book and literature organisations, and literary venues and festivals.

The Euro-Mediterranean scope of the mapping project means that the study had to be limited to the British Isles; however, the interconnected nature of the British and North American book market is noted, and the bibliography on which the study draws – based on the British National Bibliography database – includes all publications available in the British Isles, some of which may be US co-editions. It would be very useful to extend the study in the future to cover North America, and possibly all English-language territories, to obtain a more complete picture of translation from Arabic into English.

The study focuses on translation into English, and does not take into consideration autochthonous minority languages spoken in the British Isles – Irish and Scottish Gaelic, Scots and Welsh. Apart from the few

exceptions of individual translations produced as part of a project or for a festival hosting authors from Arab countries, we have found no evidence of translations into these languages.

1.3 Findings

1.3.1 Literature translated from Arabic – volume and trends

Translation of modern and contemporary literature from Arabic is a relatively recent phenomenon, but an increased interest in Arab writing and culture in general has been the strongest observed trend. Of key importance among initiatives aiming to give Arabic literature greater visibility is the London-based *Banipal Magazine of Modern Arab Literature* and projects such as *Beirut39* organised by the Hay Festival, while London's *Dash Arts Arabic series* or the *Arabic Arts Festival* in Liverpool and London introduce the arts and culture of the Arab world in a wider sense.

The number of literary translations published over the period covered by the study (310 in total) doubled in the second decade, and especially in the second half of it. While in the first years of the 1990s the average number of published translations was between two and eight per year, in the 2000s the average rose to between ten and sixteen, with twenty-six translations from Arabic published in 2009.

Yet, the study concludes that there are still not enough translations published from Arabic, and that, with some exceptions, interest in books coming from the Arab world is determined by socio-political factors rather than by the desire to explore the literary culture of the Middle East and North Africa for its own merits. This means that books from this region are often approached primarily as a source of socio-political commentary or documentary, rather than as literary works per se.

It seems to be mainly extra-literary factors that make publishers take an interest in books from the region. In the case of Arabic literature, we have witnessed a sharp rise in interest in the Arab and Muslim world following the events of 9/11. Despite this, translation from Arabic largely remains the preserve of specialised publishers.

1.3.2 Need for reliable data on published translations

Embarking on the study, the authors were faced with a major problem: the lack of an existing bibliography of translated works. While data on published books in general are available through the British National Bibliography and Nielsen BookData (at a cost by the latter), there is no systematic collection of data or statistical analysis of translations published and distributed in the UK and Ireland. The *Index Translationum*, the global UNESCO database of translations, only started receiving and processing data from the British National Bibliography very recently and still presents an uneven and unreliable picture of translations into English.

The authors therefore had to compile their own bibliography before they could assess trends in the publishing of literary translations from Arabic. In addition, it has not been possible to conclusively compare publication figures with data from other countries on the one hand, and with translations from

other languages into English on the other. A random check of *Index Translationum* data for 2005 suggests that translations from Arabic are relatively fewer than translations into English from other foreign languages, ranging from Chinese and Japanese to Scandinavian languages, and certainly far below the leading source languages French, Spanish, German, Italian and Russian.

The need for a reliable mechanism to collect and analyse data on translated books is therefore one of the most urgent issues to have emerged from this and other studies and surveys, including those conducted by Literature Across Frontiers.¹

1.3.3 Need for a comprehensive resource on translation matters in the United Kingdom and Ireland

Currently, there are several organisations dealing with translation which provide some information, but none of them offers a comprehensive coverage of this field in the United Kingdom and Ireland comparable to, for example, the Three Percent website in the United States.² There is therefore the need for a comprehensive resource on translation matters in the United Kingdom and Ireland that would connect existing information sources and channel relevant information and news from abroad.

1.3.4 Translators, translator training, work conditions and quality control

While there are a number of translators working from Arabic, the vast majority have received no specialised literary translation training, although literary translation training for Arabists is becoming available in the framework of some university courses. It is widely acknowledged that translation studies courses do not necessarily produce literary translators; it appears that short-term training and skills development opportunities, such as summer schools, seminars, workshops and mentoring schemes would be the best options to offer those who might wish to become literary translators, or have already started publishing translations from these languages. Examples of best practice are given in the individual studies, but such initiatives are costly and require substantial subsidies.

Literary translators from Arabic rely on other sources of income and literary translation is not seen as a viable career choice among students and graduates, with a main career required alongside translation in order to earn a living. On the other hand, the connection between the academe and literary translation is relatively strong and many literary translators mentioned and interviewed here are academics. Paradoxically, translation practice is not accorded academic and research credit, something that is seen as a serious problem both in Britain and the US.

The demographic of the translator population has begun to shift during the last few years of the period in question, most notably in terms of gender, age and mother tongue – many non-native Anglophone translators are now being published. There is much optimism in the Arabic literary translation scene about this new diversity of voices and the subtly accurate versions of contemporary writing they can render.

¹ See *Publishing Translations in Europe, Trends 1990-2005*, Literature Across Frontiers, 2010. Available in pdf at www.lafpublications.org and *Research into Barriers to Translation and Best Practices*, conducted by Dalkey Archive Press for the Global Translation Initiative, March 2011, available in pdf at www.dalkeyarchive.com.

² <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threepencent>

However, this new generation of translators includes individuals who are not from the privileged educational background traditionally associated with the field, and therefore its professional development needs to be supported by the various measures mentioned in the recommendations section of this study.

Translation quality monitoring and assurance is another issue that comes up repeatedly with regard to Arabic-to-English translation. Publishing houses generally do not have the required expertise to assess translations from these languages or to offer editorial input, leaving translations without sufficient additional editing. There is also frequently a lack of professional editing of the original Arabic published text, which needs to be addressed. Measures to upgrade editorial care on the part of publishers and create a more robust critical review culture for translations from Arabic, which engages with the quality of translations, are therefore crucial to improving the quality of published translations.

1.3.5 Publishing, marketing of books and support for translation

The study concludes that there is a need to establish a better coordinated system of support for the entire process, from the selection of titles, to translation quality monitoring, editing and marketing of books, starting with the provision of selective and high quality information on titles and authors to publishers based in the British Isles and Ireland. Given that publication into English is seen as being key to further international dissemination, a concentrated effort should be made to provide such information to publishers, and to support it by translation and marketing funds.

A key problem identified by many respondents is the fact that the Arab world has done very little to promote its own writing internationally and even less to support its translation. Before the changes that have swept through the Arab world while this report was in the making, it was understood that many Arab writers would in fact prefer not to be internationally associated with the ruling regimes of the region, particularly repressive states where censorship and government control of publishing was rife. It remains to be seen what changes the Arab uprisings will bring in this regard, but it is unlikely that resources will be made available for the international promotion of culture and for translation in the short term, whether at pan-Arab or national level.

The lack of funding for translation from Arabic in particular is seen as a key obstacle to the dissemination of Arabic writing abroad, and the burden of funding inbound translation from Arabic and its marketing has so far been carried by British arts funding authorities. At the same time, a coordinated pan-Arab initiative is currently difficult to envisage for many reasons, and an initiative involving a raft of measures, based in the UK and drawing on the expertise of Arabists and native speakers alike, is seen as the most realistic way forward.

1.3.6 The role of the media

The study concludes that the British Isles lack the degree of audio-visual media coverage which books and literature receive in other countries, and, with some negligible exceptions, television and radio almost never deal with literature in translation. As for press coverage, very little space is offered to translations in review sections of national papers and literary magazines. Reviews of translations from Arabic are no

exception, with well-informed, in-depth reviews written by cultural and literary journalists familiar with the language and cultural context being extremely rare. Serious critical assessment of literary translation from Arabic is therefore missing or is restricted to academic journals, and this in turn has implications for setting translation quality standards.

1.3.7 Literary exchange and mobility – the broader picture

Literary exchange and intercultural dialogue being the desired state of affairs – as opposed to a one-way translation traffic, which is generally the case where English is the source and target language – we need to take a look at the bigger picture. While translation from English is notoriously high, representing around 50% or more of translations in most European countries, translation of quality titles and new writing, including neglected genres such as poetry, is relatively low. In other words, the “commercial imperative” is at work on both sides, and a concentrated effort on the part of public bodies supporting arts activities is needed to encourage and foster exchanges, which in turn contribute to the creation of an environment receptive to dialogue between cultures, with all that it entails beyond the translation and publication of books.

Secondly, exchange and dialogue also involves immigrant communities, including resident authors who have settled in the UK and Ireland but continue writing in their native language. This is the case particularly with Arab authors who are often not considered to be part of the local literary scene, and do not benefit from public support, whether for the creation of new work or to have their work translated into English.

Thirdly, the mobility of translators, authors, editors, publishers, festival and venue programmers and other professionals is key to ensuring continued literary exchange, but is extremely limited between the UK and the region in focus. Both outbound and inbound mobility funding is scarce and may be tied to one-off initiatives (for instance a visit organised by the British Council or one of the Arts Councils). Festivals and venues have to depend on foreign sources when they wish to bring authors from abroad, and unlike many other European countries, the UK has few residential facilities for foreign authors (including authors persecuted by the regime of their country), or opportunities for translators from abroad. Likewise, opportunities for literary exchange combined with translation skills development are sometimes offered within the framework of individual projects, but opportunities comparable to those offered by the translators’ and writers’ houses in other European countries, and notably in Belgium, France and German-speaking countries, are still missing.

On the whole, the study concludes that provision for literary exchange and mobility in the British Isles is largely insufficient, and that independent organisations are not given the incentives and support necessary to plan ambitious international projects and offer opportunities to professionals, both local and from abroad.

1.4 Main conclusions

1.4.1 In-depth study of the current environment

The recent changes in literary translation infrastructure, the re-structuring of the arts funding system in 2010-2011, and the increased interest in translation and international content, especially in England, all call for an in-depth study of the current environment in which literary translation exists. This study, combined with a detailed analysis of potential multi-stakeholder best practice, would chart the way forward, and create international opportunities allowing sustained, on-going and fruitful cooperation and exchange.

1.4.2 Key role of subsidies

The report identifies the instrumental role played by international exchange and the mobility of writers and translators in creating an environment which simultaneously generates more translations of high quality and is more receptive to them. A central conclusion of this report is that the commercial imperative is the main obstacle in the way of better mobility, training, publishing or live literary events in the UK and Ireland; public support and (to a lesser degree) private sponsorship remain the sine qua non of international content. This is despite the fact that commercially successful publishers and festivals are well positioned to take the perceived risks associated with the publishing and promotion of translated literature. Support for independent publishers (who are the mainstay of translated literature in the British Isles) that targets all stages of the publication process, and initiatives aimed at professional and audience development, are essential if international content and literary exchange are to be increased in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

1.4.3 Need for stronger synergies and cooperation strategies

Another main conclusion of the study is that there is a need for stronger synergies and cooperation strategies between the stakeholders – public bodies, private foundations, higher education and the independent arts sector – to deliver, in a sustainable way, the kinds of initiatives identified and highlighted in this study as examples of best practice. Such initiatives have been set up, mostly with public support and mostly in the countries of origin, in the case of translation from Turkish and Hebrew in the East Mediterranean. Translation from Arabic and literary exchange with the Arab world is, however, a far more complex proposition, involving a large and diverse region, and will require correspondingly complex solutions with input from a range of actors and stakeholders.

1.5 Recommendations

1.5.1 A centralised online resource

At present it is difficult to access information about translation matters in general and about translated books and related events in particular. Attempts have been made to establish such an online resource in the past, for example the British Council translation website, with mixed results. Yet, a current, high-quality, comprehensive online resource with relevant links would greatly benefit the overall profile of translated literature and the related sector.

1.5.2 Bibliography and translation statistics

In the absence of a reliable, exhaustive, and easily-accessible bibliography of works in translation by language and country, it is not possible to get a full picture of the history of translation in the British Isles, nor discern trends in translation publishing. There is an urgent need to create a mechanism to collect data on the publishing of translations. In addition, the authors of this report recommend the creation of a database of translated theatre plays, which are not always published in book form.

1.5.3 Translators, training and conditions of work

There is a need to develop a coordinated raft of measures to support translators:

- develop and improve training opportunities, especially in terms of short term training, residencies and mentoring
- improve translators' contractual conditions and remuneration – a role for the Translators' Association
- create support measures complementary to payment offered by publishers (following models and best practices in other countries)
- develop or improve mechanisms for translation quality control and feedback on the standard of published translations, and measures to improve editing practices of both source and target texts by means of internships, training and seminars, and the production of manual-type publications, such as *Translation in Practice: A Symposium*, by Dalkey Archive Press.

An up-to-date, fully detailed contact database of currently active translators (identified by country of origin, so as to assess UK/US questions of translation) needs to be established, not only for the languages currently in question. In the absence of any significant membership of professional associations such as the Translators' Association such information is hard to obtain, except through publisher-by-publisher appeal.

1.5.4 Publishing and the book trade

It is essential to get a better picture of the trade end of publishing in order to ascertain attitudes – and barriers – to the uptake of work in translation by bookshops, libraries and the public, in order to devise marketing and reader development strategies for translated literature. In addition, there is a need to approach and interview sales reps, bookshop buyers, distributors and publicists to get a picture of the attitudes and barriers that exist in that last intervening section of the publishing endeavour between book production and reader. Online retailers such as Amazon or the Book Depository also need to be assessed both in terms of patterns of buying and patterns of related publicity.

1.5.5 Outreach to independent presses

As larger publishers and conglomerates are fairly narrow in their commitments to work in translation, outreach to smaller independent presses is needed in order to achieve the desired diversity identified above. This outcome is best served by promoting foreign titles and literature in translation to smaller

publishers alongside larger ones. These might be publishers with translation lists, or publishers with specialized interests, whether in a region or in particular genres or forms.

1.5.6 E-publishing

The potential of e-publishing for the dissemination of translated literature needs to be assessed, whether in relation to books, internet publishing or the growing influence of literary websites and blogs.

1.5.7 Translation and the media

Review editors in the UK and Ireland are notoriously poor at ensuring adequate space for translation reviews, proper recognition and assessment of translation quality, and even at mentioning translators' names. The time-frame of this report has not allowed an in-depth examination of media coverage of translated work, including mainstream press, radio, television and online material, nor the acquisition of more detailed information on this subject from publishers' publicists and marketing departments. A more thorough assessment of coverage by the media – print, digital and audio-visual – is required, so as to formulate recommendations for measures that would change this culture across the board, under the aegis of the Translators' Association and the Society of Authors, the British Centre for Literary Translation, English PEN and other relevant organisations. Support for workshops and seminars on reviewing, the role of translators as reviewers, and general measures to improve reviewing by the mainstream media are called for, as well as a specialized review publication dedicated to a more detailed analysis, which would improve translation quality as a result of qualified peer review.

1.5.8 Access to work in translation

Libraries are a key component in the delivery and accessibility of work in translation. Although it is known that library budgets have been massively reduced, it has not been possible within the framework of this report to assess the impact of those kinds of cuts on work in translation. Borrowing statistics, acquisitions policy and trends would all reveal useful information, both in terms of supply and demand. Observing public borrowing patterns would also facilitate analysis such as the impact of reviews and festival or media appearances, as reflected in spikes in interest by the reading public. In addition, library borrowing statistics might yield powerful arguments about the interest in translation in support of grant applications that would not be evident in sales.

1.5.9 Ensuring diversity in publishing, and in the programming of festivals, venues and projects

More resources need to be made available to organisations, venues and smaller presses publishing and promoting work in translation in order to ensure that diversity across culture, gender, subject matter, language and genre is achieved in the publishing and promotion of literature in general, and that small, independent presses can effectively compete in a crowded market largely hostile to translation. With respect to Arabic, there is a need to establish more balanced and comprehensive sources of information on new and suitable titles, and to create and make use of contacts between British and Arab publishers and the Arab literary world in general. It is crucial that a broader spectrum of Arab literary experts and professionals be much more widely involved in the recommendation, assessment and selection of material to be translated.

1.5.10 Support for literary exchange and mobility

Resources need to be made available to achieve a more lively and equitable literary exchange, to provide adequate mobility funding for authors, translators and other professionals, and to create more residency opportunities in the UK and Ireland, following international examples of best practice.

1.5.11 Advocacy and funding for translation

Translation into English is a priority, as it provides for onward translation into other languages. New and innovative approaches need to be developed to argue the case for financial support for literary translation – emphasizing its role in the reduction of conflict, cross-cultural dialogue and international relations, for example, in addition to making a case for diversity and access to international culture. This must be done with a view to accessing sources of funds that have not traditionally been available for the arts, literature, publishing or translation – such as charitable foundations, private individuals and innovative sponsorships.

2 Introduction

2.1 Literary translation in the British Isles – the wider context

Unlike in other European countries, translation does not form a natural part of literary life in the UK and Ireland – with the exception of translation between English and the autochthonous minority languages spoken here. Despite the fact that the British and Irish publishing industry is one of the most productive in Europe, with an average annual output of around 120,000-130,000 books, the British Isles rank lowest in Europe when it comes to publishing translations. Also, unlike in the rest of Europe, no institution collects data on published translations, making it impossible to establish the exact number and percentage that translated literature represents. The recent report on barriers to literary translation in the English-speaking world estimates that 1.5-2% of all books published in the UK are translations or around 2,500 per year, and that far fewer are literary translations.³ This is in sharp contrast with the numbers of translations published in European countries, where in smaller countries such as the Czech Republic, Finland, Estonia and Slovenia translations represented 20-30% of all published new titles over the period between 1990 - 2005, while France and Germany had a translation output of 10-15% over the same period.⁴

The reasons for the low level of interest in translated literature on the part of English-language publishers and the reading public at large has been the subject of much speculation and discussion. In general, several factors are seen as contributing to the perceived cultural insularity and attitude of indifference towards translated literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Some of the key reasons cited are the international hegemony of the English language; the low value placed on learning foreign languages; and Britain's cultural imperialist tradition of exporting rather than importing cultural products, particularly when it comes to books and literature. The colonial cultural legacy has another relevant dimension, of course, whereby writing from the "periphery" – Anglophone authors from India, Africa and the Caribbean – has achieved considerable international success in recent decades, if not quite displacing the "centre" then certainly quenching its thirst for the exotic without any translation having to be undertaken. Books by immigrants writing in English have, to a lesser extent, met these same needs, outside of any significant tradition of translation into English. Another reason often given for the dearth of literary translation in the UK and Ireland is that of "self-sufficiency": the literature published here is of a high standard, at the literary end, of high commercial value at the bestseller end, and amply satisfies the needs of a wide range of readers, as well as constituting an important export article.

Publishing translations in the United Kingdom and Ireland is therefore a specialist activity catering to a niche readership, undertaken mainly by small publishers concentrated in England and particularly in London, who are largely dependent on public subsidies from both UK funding sources and from source-

³ *Research into Barriers to Translation and Best Practices*, conducted by Dalkey Archive Press for the Global Translation Initiative, March 2011, available in pdf at www.dalkeyarchive.com

⁴ *Publishing translations in Europe, Trends 1990-2005*, Literature Across Frontiers, 2010. Available in pdf at www.lafpublications.org and www.lit-across-frontiers.org

language institutions and grants programmes. It is with the encouragement, support and work of arts bodies such as the Arts Council England and the British Council, and thanks to the work of organisations such as the British Centre for Literary Translation, English PEN, Literature Across Frontiers, the Translators Association and others, that the profile of literary translation has become more prominent and literary events have become more international in the true sense of the word. There are also several recent initiatives which have given the literary scene an international dimension: one of them is the setting up of the Free Word Centre, the first “literature house” in London; another is the Literary Translation Centre established at the London Book Fair in 2010 by a consortium of organisations, including those mentioned above, and with support from Arts Council England and the Gulbenkian Foundation. There are also several new festivals with a determinedly international focus – English PEN’s Free the Word! is one of them. The established British literary festivals, the most prominent of which are the Edinburgh International Book Festival, Cheltenham Literature Festival and the Telegraph Hay Festival, have a moderate international content, with Hay focusing on prominent international authors and bestsellers, while Edinburgh adopts a more open-minded and non-commercial policy in its international programming. The Manchester Literature Festival, established in 2005, is another notable exception, as are the leading poetry festivals, The Ledbury Poetry Festival and the Stanza Festival in St Andrews.

2.2 Translation of Arabic literature in the British Isles

This report examines the situation of Arabic literature in translation in the UK and Ireland from 1990 to 2010, touching on patterns of translation, publication, dissemination and reception, identifying areas where further research is needed, highlighting key matters of concern or enquiry, and making recommendations for further action. For the purposes of this report, unless otherwise specified, the frame of reference and the language term ‘English’ refers to the UK and Ireland and not the US or the anglophone world at large. In investigating Arabic literary translation, we are excluding completely from our study the large volume of Arabic religious texts, including the Holy Quran, the hadith and religious commentary, which constituted some of the very first Arabic writing to be rendered into English. Whilst it would clearly be a rich area for research, it lies outside the scope of the present study, as it is translated, published and marketed within a different context to that examined here.

2.2.1 Early Arabic literature

Oral Arabic literature is known to have been culturally significant since at least 500 AD, and the first poems were written down not long before the Holy Quran, towards the end of the seventh century. There was an important translation movement into Arabic from Hellenic, Syrian, Pahlavi, and Sanskrit works under the Abbasid Caliphate (750-1258), along with translations from Arabic into Latin and other European languages. The golden age of Al-Andalus, centred on Granada and Córdoba, is also famous for the culture of international exchange and translation into and out of Arabic it fostered. After the fall of Al-Andalus and the subsequent widespread suppression of Arabic culture in Europe there was a marked decline in European translations out of Arabic, and it was only from the early eighteenth century that, very gradually, this began to change, partly as a result of European colonial involvement in the region. Over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, fuelled by orientalist interest rather than literary

appreciation, versions of the Quran were translated into English, along with poetry and *The Thousand and One Nights*.

2.2.2 Arabic literary translation in the twentieth century

The twentieth century was an exciting period in Arabic literature, witnessing the shift towards fiction and away from poetry for the first time in the language's history. This involved the birth of the Arabic novel, the development of the short story and of modern Arabic drama, and a wide variety of literary experimentation. However, the international literary community missed out on these developments at the time, as international demand for and interest in Arabic literature in translation was considerably sparse until Naguib Mahfouz was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1988. Before this point, as many scholars have noted⁵, there was a powerfully pervasive orientalist notion that modern Arabic literature was compromised in terms of maturity, and irrelevant to outsiders. It was seen, in the main, as only having worth as social documentary, rather than as literature *per se*. It can be argued that this notion is still at large, influencing the selection of titles for translation into English, as we shall see further, and the distinguished translator and literary scholar Marilyn Booth has coined the term 'orientalist ethnographicism' for this phenomenon. This tendency may well skew the selection of literary works for the international audience to some extent, but for the first half of the twentieth century it almost completely prevented their translation at all. Literature was afforded, at best, a marginal status within Oriental and Middle East studies, and – as the translators of the period can testify – it was almost impossible to find a publisher willing to take on an Arabic book in translation.

Consequently, according to S.J. Altouma, between 1947 and 1967 there were probably only sixteen Arabic books translated into English. This was the period in which the legendary Arabist and tireless champion of Arabic literary translation Denys Johnson Davies was working to open up the field, collecting and translating two volumes of short stories, for which he then spent several years finding a publisher. It was also the period in which the very first Naguib Mahfouz novel appeared in English (*Midaq Alley*, 1966, translated by Trevor LeGassick).

Things began to change from the late 1960s: from this point, through the 1970s and 1980s, there was a gradual but crucial expansion in academic interest in Arabic literature. The literary scholarship this new interest produced helped to gain a degree of respect and legitimacy for Arabic literature as an art form, beyond its supposed function as a social document. A healthier number of translations began to appear in English – according to S.J. Altouma around sixty novels and forty anthologies were published between 1968 and 1988. Denys Johnson Davies's task in finding publishers was slowly becoming less torturous, and he translated around ten novels and anthologies during this period. With a few notable exceptions, the writing finally emerging in translation was still, in those days, largely from Egypt, while the richness and diversity of the rest of the Arab world was being overlooked. This tendency was of course linked to the historical colonial ties between Egypt and Britain, as well as Egypt's pan-Arab cultural dominance in other arenas, notably film. The rise of international and academic feminism in the later part of this period

⁵ For example Trevor LeGassick, Sahih J. Altouma

gradually provoked an interest in Arab women writers, so that during the 1980s Nawal Saadawi, Hanan al-Shaykh and others began to appear in English (often translated by female translators).

The last twenty years

Mahfouz's Nobel Prize award in 1988 heralded the start of a new era of gradually increasing anglophone and international interest, and the period our study focuses on begins with what Roger Allen calls 'some kind of heyday' in the publication of contemporary Arabic literature. 'The award of the Nobel Prize in Literature to an Arab author was seen by many, particularly in the Arab world region itself, as a significant gesture to recognize (at last, one might say) a literary tradition whose pre-modern heritage had long been acknowledged as an enormous influence on Western genres, but whose modern creativity had been substantially neglected or rather completely overlooked.'⁶ As we shall see, this 'striking departure from the earlier phases', as Altouma calls it, involved not only the much more frequent, regular and varied translations of Arabic literature, but the involvement of many more publishers in the process. So for the first time, during the 1990s, major commercial publishers and university presses began translating and promoting Arabic fiction. At last, the geographical demographic of the translated authors began to diversify, with 'Abd al-Rahman Munif and Hanan al-Shaykh being published by major British publishers. At the same time, Saqi and Quartet Books began to emerge as important independent publishers of Arabic writing in translation during the 1990s.

The events of September 2001 lead to a surge of interest in the Arab world, reflected in everything from Arabic provision and uptake at universities to a growing interest in and consumption of Arabic cultural product. In the UK, the British Council and Arts Council England followed the trend with an increased support for initiatives aimed at bringing Arab literature closer to the UK reading public: Arts Council England funded translations from Arabic as part of their provision for publishers, and a UK publishing delegation visited the Cairo Book Fair in anticipation of the Arab World being the market focus at the London Book Fair and the UK being the guest of honour at the Cairo Book Fair. In 2009 the two organisations jointly ran a landmark Arabic-English literary translation workshop in Cairo and supported Beirut 39, a project of the Hay Telegraph Festival which selected 39 Arab authors under the age of 39 whose work was translated in a Bloomsbury anthology of the same name. Latest initiatives by the British Centre for Literary Translation have introduced Arabic in its Summer School for translators and in its mentorship scheme started in 2010.

Yet, translation from Arabic and translation in general is almost entirely dependent on subsidies and this situation is seen by many to constitute a serious threat to dissemination of Arabic literature in English, as it means that everything from the selection of titles to be translated, to the way they are translated and marketed, is potentially being dictated by the economics of translation and the commercial imperative which rules the publishing industry. At the same time and rather paradoxically, a region with some of the richest nation states in the world, and with such an intense need to be understood by the rest of the

⁶ Allen, Roger, Introduction to Translation Review special issue Translating Arabic Literature, 65, (2003), 1 – 7.

global community, is investing virtually nothing in the international promotion and translation of its literature.

2.2.3 Linguistic and literary issues of note

Not all Arab authors write in Arabic: not only are many North African writers francophone, but there is a growing Arabic literary diaspora writing and publishing in various languages, including Arabic. The remit of this study excludes Arab writers working in any language other than Arabic, even if translated into English. In the UK there is a small but significant community of Arab writers, some of whom are writing in Arabic and some in English. The issue of whether or not these writers are seen (or see themselves) as being part of the British literary scene, and how they are treated by the arts industry as a result, is one that demands further investigation. Furthermore, this may directly contribute to the phenomenon of many of the UK-based Arab writers being published in the USA, although, as we shall see, it must be born in mind that much of the Arabic literature translated into English is published by North American publishers in general. However, arts funding in the British Isles is not finding its way to the locally based Arab creative diaspora, either in terms of support for individual writers or for the translation of their work.

3 Publishing

3.1 Towards a bibliography of published translations

Other than the bibliography in Salih J Altouma's *Modern Arabic Literature in Translation: A Companion*, (London: Saqi, 2005), which only goes as far as 2003, there is no publicly accessible bibliography of Arabic literature in English. Both WorldCat and UNESCO's *Index Translationum* are partly useful, but both have shortcomings for this purpose: WorldCat searches produce data not relevant to the UK/Irish context, while *Index Translationum* does not contain comprehensive UK data, as there is currently no institution collecting data on translations published in the United Kingdom.⁷ There is a potential need, therefore, for a reliable mechanism to be set up to collect data on the publication of translations in the UK and Ireland, which would in turn supply data to *Index Translationum*.

In our attempt to compile a bibliography of literary works translated from Arabic and published in the British Isles during the period 1990 - 2010, we have used *The British National Bibliography*, as the most reliable source for the task. Whilst it contains quite a number of titles that appear to be foreign publications, their inclusion in the *BNB* is considered by librarians to make them count as UK books with respect to distribution and availability (for example titles published by the American University in Cairo Press). Whilst the distinction between US and UK publishers and distributors is important given that our scope is UK/Ireland only, many US titles are in fact available here as readily as titles published in the UK and Ireland, as we shall see in more detail later.

⁷ The British Library is listed as the UK partner – and presumably supplier of data – to *Index Translationum*, but there is no evidence that the Library is in fact collecting such data in the same way its counterparts do in other countries.

There are, however, several drawbacks in relying on the *BNB*: the complexity of the Dewey classification system makes for a time-consuming and laborious extraction of records, and titles are sometimes misclassified. Also, as the *BNB* includes pre-publication records, some of the listed books may not eventually be published in the year for which they had been planned or their publication may be cancelled altogether.

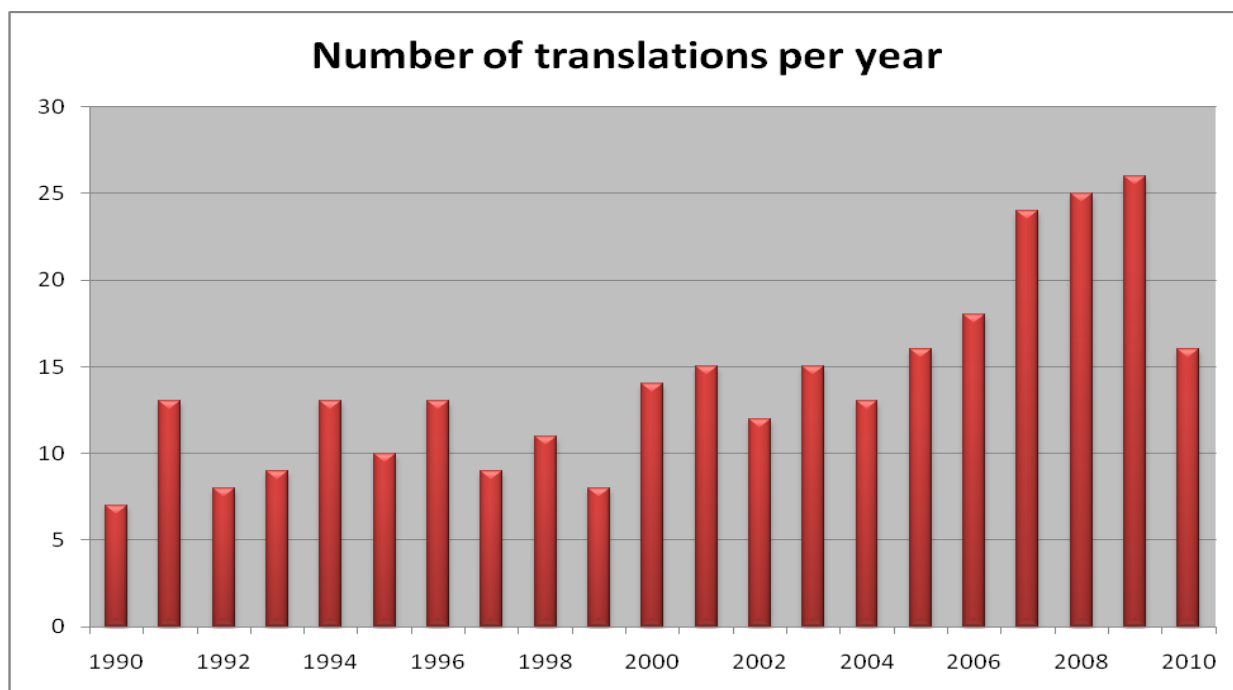
Literature translated from Arabic published during the period 1990 - 2010

The data gathered from the *BNB* suggest that close to 300 titles in the category of literature (fiction, short stories, essays, memoirs, poetry) were published in the last two decades, including 108 titles published by AUCP in Cairo which are distributed in the UK. Translations from Arabic show a clear upward trend, reaching over twenty titles per year in the second half of the current decade. (Not all titles to be published in 2010 had been recorded at the time of writing, so it is possible that there may in fact have been close to or over 30 titles published.)

Table 1. Number of translations from Arabic into English per year (2010 figures incomplete)

Year	90	91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10
Number of translations	7	13	8	9	13	10	13	9	11	8	14	15	12	15	13	16	18	24	25	26	16

Table 2. Translations from Arabic into English, 1990 - 2010



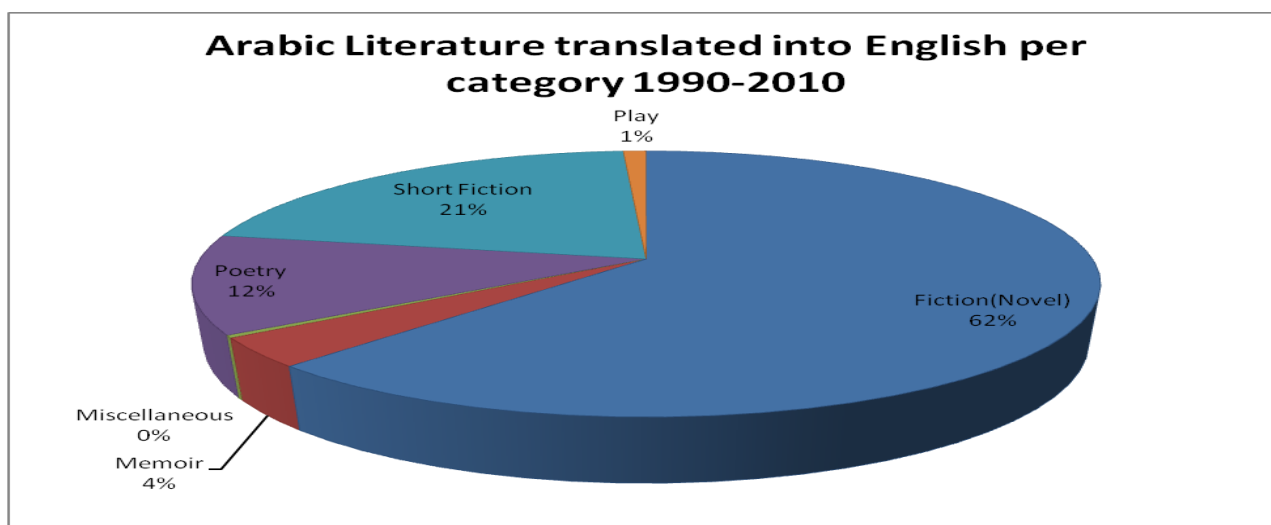
3.1.1 What is published?

The leading genre is the novel, followed by short stories and poetry. Our bibliography lists 192 novels, 65 collections of short stories (including various anthologies), 37 collections of poetry, and 11 memoir titles. Only 3 books containing theatre plays are recorded.

Table 3. Arabic Literature translated into English per category, 1990-2010

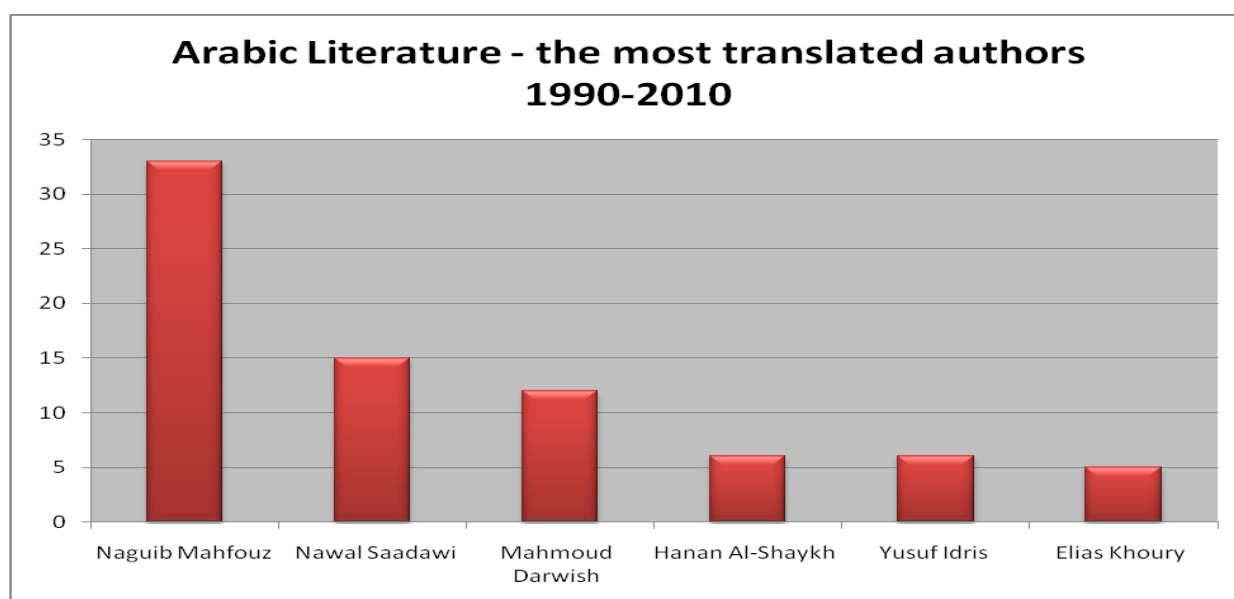
Fiction (Novel)	Memoir	Miscellaneous	Poetry	Short Fiction	Plays
192	11	1	37	65	3

Table 4. Arabic Literature translated into English per category, 1990-2010



The most translated author is Naguib Mahfouz with 33 books, followed by Nawal El Saadawi, with 15 books.

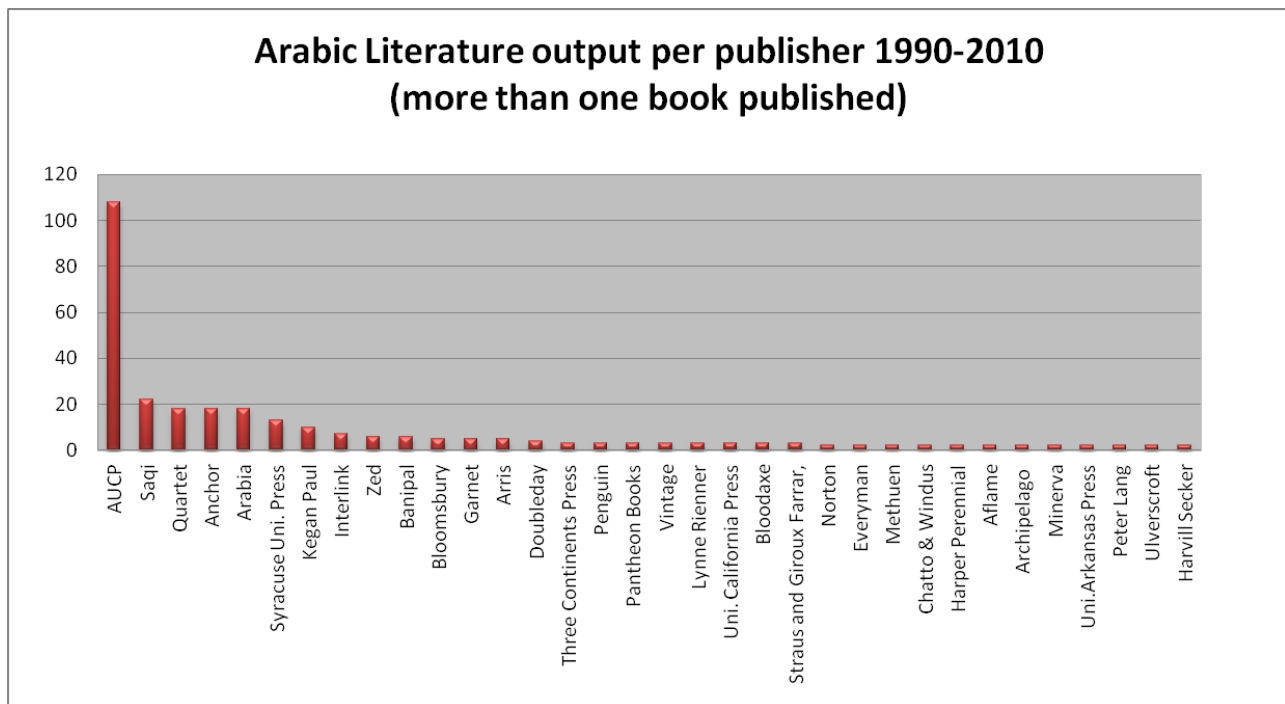
Table 5. The most translated authors 1990-2010



3.1.2 Publishers, magazines, websites

Translation tends to be a specialist activity in the UK book market and translation from Arabic is no exception. While the American University in Cairo Press is clearly a leader in the field with their policy of systematic publication of contemporary Arabic literature in English translation, there are a handful of UK-based publishers who specialize in publishing translations from Arabic, and these are profiled below. The remaining publishers are those who have an international list but have published only one or two titles translated from Arabic. Re-editions and reprints by multiple publishers have been counted once against the first publisher.

Table 6. Arabic literature in translation into English: output per publisher



Profiles of publishers

3.1.3 Banipal Magazine of Modern Arab Literature

Banipal Magazine publishes contemporary Arab authors in English translation, no matter where they are writing and publishing. An independent magazine, *Banipal's* three issues a year present both established and emerging Arab writers in English for the first time through poems, short stories or excerpts from novels. It also includes occasional columns of a literary influences feature, a travelling tale, and an interview with a publisher or editor, plus author interviews, book reviews and photo-reports of literary events. Each issue has a main theme, as well as being illustrated throughout with author photographs, and the full-colour covers often feature prominent Arab artists. (From *Banipal's* website www.banipal.co.uk.)

Banipal occupies a central and crucial position in the field of Arabic literature in English translation and in the field of publishing translated literature in the UK in general, being the only magazine which has systematically kept a finger on the pulse of the literary life of an entire region for over a decade.

Established in 1998, it had published 39 issues by the end of 2010, creating a groundbreaking forum for emerging writers and translators, and serving as an invaluable resource allowing UK publishers to access a wealth of writing from the Arab world. The magazine's influence on the rest of the publishing industry in terms of selecting who is translated and promoted cannot be overstated. *Banipal* serves as a primary source of Arabic literature for anyone who cannot read Arabic, well beyond the native English-language readership, and as such its influence (and its responsibility) is phenomenal. *Banipal*'s public events – individual launches and readings, as well as extensive tours and collaborative events at the London Book Fair – are also widely praised among writers and their translators. In addition to all this, *Banipal* has published several books (see bibliography), and the Banipal Literary Trust administers the annual Saif Ghobash-Banipal Prize for Arabic Translation. Issues of the magazine usually have a particular focus, such as the literature of a specific country or region, or a section of the diaspora, and tribute issues to individual writers. Particularly noteworthy is the fact that *Banipal*'s activity is achieved by a very small team and on an extremely limited budget – although a recipient of Arts Council funding, this is an operation that runs on the founders' passionate dedication to the cause of promoting Arabic literature to English readers.

Banipal is however also sometimes seen in Arabic to English translation circles as suffering from uneven translation and editorial quality. It must be emphasized here that translation quality is an issue of concern in the field overall and that this is not unique to *Banipal*. Also, the editorial team's strong influence over which Arab writers gain international exposure and attention, and are therefore eventually translated and published, means that their choices are inevitably the subject of scrutiny.

Website: <http://www.banipal.co.uk/>

3.1.4 American University in Cairo Press

Although AUCP is not a UK-based press, it holds a unique position in the field of publishing contemporary Arabic fiction in English translation, as its titles are distributed here by Haus Arabia Books, and are included in the *British National Bibliography*. Celebrating its 50th birthday this year, the AUCP boasts a list consisting of some 1,000 titles including academic works, travel literature and other non-fiction. According to AUCP's Associate Director for Editorial Programmes Neil Hewison, around 150 of these are literary translations, all of which are in print, around 20% being titles that AUCP have bought from other publishers and only hold the Middle East rights to. They aim to publish ten to fifteen new literary titles every year, and in some years as many as twenty are published. It is perhaps this prolific output that provokes the question as to whether the AUCP goes for quantity rather than quality in its selection. Neil Hewison refutes this claim categorically:

We try to select books carefully, on good advice. Although we publish 10 to 15 or even up to 20 a year, we would never put out books just to keep up that quota, definitely not. And of course this is all subjective, so we please some and upset others. There's no way I can say that our selection represents absolutely the best books of the year – we can only

translate a tiny drop per year from that ocean of the thousands of books which appear in Arabic.

The role of the AUCP

AUCP is a seminal important publisher of Arabic fiction in English, the leading English-language publishing house in the Middle East, which licenses foreign editions of Arab writers in forty languages, including the works of the late Egyptian Nobel laureate Naguib Mahfouz, and the international bestsellers of Alaa Al Aswany.

Being Naguib Mahfouz's primary English-language publisher, as well as his worldwide agent for all translation rights, has been central to the press's development – what AUCP Director Mark Linz refers to as 'a major watershed.'⁸ AUCP's translation of Mahfouz's work prior to the award of the Nobel Prize in 1988 was seen as a significant contributing factor to his being awarded the prize. As Mahfouz himself wrote, 'it was through the translation of these novels into English [...] that other publishers became aware of them and requested their translation into other foreign languages, and I believe that these translations were among the foremost reasons for my being awarded the Nobel prize.'⁹ There are now some 500 editions in forty languages of the works of Naguib Mahfouz published or licensed by the AUC Press. The first of his novels to be translated into English was *Miramar*, in 1978, and his most translated novel is *Midaq Alley*, which has appeared in more than thirty foreign editions in fifteen languages. Given that Mahfouz's award can be said to have launched Arabic literature in translation onto the world stage, leading to a significant increase in its translation in general, the AUCP's role in the development of the genre has been pivotal. The press has continued to be the major source of Arabic literature in English worldwide, and has launched the international career of several major Arab writers.

Yet, some see the AUCP as not always being rigorous enough when it comes to translation quality, and it has been also criticized with regard to translators' rates of pay and contractual issues. A recent case involved a number of translators taking collective action to force the press to give them better contractual rights.

It must be stressed here that the AUCP's role in terms of 'bringing the literature, the culture, the story of the Middle East to those outside the Middle East,' as Linz describes it (*ibid.*), has been and continues to be hugely important, and is valued as such even by those who may be critical of the press on other counts.

As acclaimed translator and scholar of Arabic literature at Durham University Paul Starkey puts it frankly: 'AUCP – a frustrating organization to work with in some respects, and with miserable rates of pay, but still commendable in many respects, in terms of making available a body of literature that they can't really be making any money out of.'

Mahfouz sales – subsidizing other titles?

⁸ <http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-newarabicbooks-people-interviews.htm>

⁹ As quoted by AUCP in <http://www1.aucegypt.edu/publications/auctoday/AUCTodaySpring10/AUCPress.htm>

Asked about the idea that the huge sales of Naguib Mahfouz's books and translation rights subsidizes this literary outreach work to some extent, Neil Hewison had this to say:

Not directly, no. We're a non-profit organization: we publish a range of books, some make money and some lose money. Literature – with the two exceptions of Mahfouz and al-Aswany – doesn't generate income! So if we were a commercial house we would have dropped most of our literary list years ago. As a commercial house, you just couldn't justify not making any profit on a whole section like this. The income generated by things like our picture guides to Egyptian museums, guidebooks, and books on ancient Egypt – our broad range of titles on Egypt – make money that feeds back in to support the literary side of our list. Another way we try to help fund the English edition of a novel is to negotiate a contract with the author where we acquire all the other language rights to the novel, so we can sell them off to recoup some of the costs that are otherwise lost. Because translated books are so much more expensive to produce than originals are. So in this way, we act as an agent for the author, more or less, with part of the proceeds going to the author and part to us to offset translation costs. So we do balance books, but we are not looking to make a profit. Our literature sales are not spectacular. Mahfouz and al-Aswany sell well enough, but the rest of them are done for love, and for the idea of it, the mission, really, of making Arab literature available to a wider audience, not for money.

This description of AUCP as a publisher with a non-commercial interest in the promotion of Arabic literature is reminiscent of the common US publishing model – exemplified by university presses which specialize in translations, such as Northwestern University Press, or university-based presses such as Dalkey Archive or Open Letter Press – which is uncommon in the UK where publishers operate on a commercial basis with the support of arts funding bodies or books councils. Unlike in the UK, the existence of these presses in the US enables a wider range of less commercial translated literature to be published. Noble as this way of operating sounds, it does however prompt the question: how does this model compare to a commercial one? It seems that the only way mainstream corporate publishers can feel comfortable taking on Arabic literature in translation is for them to turn to very marketable types of material, an assumption that causes widespread concern. Is non-profit or publicly subsidized publishing the only viable model for quality literature in translation? It seems that in the Arab world, this model (foundation-based or university-based publishing) is the only one that has so far brought systematic benefits in an environment relatively free from commercial pressures. But is this polarization of a cultural industry healthy? Is there a middle way? If the middle way is represented by medium-sized presses like Saqi and Haus Arabia, which need some subventions to be able to continue selecting work on the basis of literary quality, but are also relatively commercially viable, then arguably their funding should be prioritized.

Website: <http://www.aucpress.com>

3.1.5 Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing

This is an important initiative, of which many people in the industry have high hopes: it is seen as well-funded, well-run, well-intentioned, and – crucially – it is a joint operation between Arab and British professionals. Established in October 2008 with headquarters in Doha, BQFP is owned by the Qatar

Foundation and managed by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. Their stated main aims are: to publish books of excellence and originality in English and Arabic; to promote the love of reading and writing, and help establish a vibrant literary culture in Qatar and the Middle East; and to achieve the transfer of publishing and related skills into Qatar – implying a commitment to improving standards of translation into and out of Arabic.

So far, BQFP has approached the first of these aims by starting an interesting list including fiction and non-fiction for adults and for children, educational books for schools, academic books for universities and researchers, and information and reference titles. In 2010 they announced the translation and publication of a work by Ahmed Khaled Tawfiq, the Arab world's best-selling science fiction writer. Described by BQFP as 'a grim futuristic account of Egyptian society in 2023', it is a bestseller across the Arab world, having been reprinted three times, and as such the decision to translate this book is a refreshing change. Whilst looking like a commercial choice rather than an elite intellectual one, it clearly does not conform to the worst type of stereotypes that some commercial publishers are seen as embracing, such as the 'memoir fixation' or 'unveiling of the Arab woman' model often seen in choices by corporate publishers.

The second aim is valuable in our context because of its potential to alleviate some of the problems experienced by the UK translator or publisher dealing with a largely unedited Arabic source text for translation, as discussed elsewhere in this study, as well as its potential to nurture and develop new writing talent in the Arab world, where resources for professional development of writers are scarce, and it is encouraging indeed to see BQFP establishing literary and translation events, as well as creative writing workshops.

Achieving their third aim involves, promisingly, 'regular internships and secondments in Doha and at Bloomsbury's headquarters in London, training courses in key areas of publishing, and mentoring of aspiring Qatari publishers.' In terms of improving translation quality, the first concrete step was to hold the inaugural annual BQFP International Translation Conference in May 2010 in Doha, in partnership with Carnegie-Mellon University Qatar. Consisting of workshops and plenary sessions with translators at various stages of their careers, BQFP state that the conference 'is designed to create a Gulf-based platform to discuss issues related to translation at both the theoretical and practical level.'

Website: <http://www.bqfp.com.qa/>

3.1.6 Saqi Books

Saqi was founded in 1984 with the stated aim of 'printing quality academic and general interest books on the Middle East.' Since then Saqi has expanded its network to include writers from all over the world, but is still widely known as a publisher of Arabic literature, and as a press that has often reflected progressive trends – it was amongst the first in the 1980s to publish feminist works on women and Islam, such as Fatima Mernissis' *Beyond the Veil*. Its Beirut sister company Dar al-Saqi is a respected publisher of literature from across the Arab world; UK Saqi is therefore sometimes able to translate books to which Dar

al-Saqi hold the translation rights and which they might not have afforded otherwise – essential in the current economic climate and given the realities of arts funding.

Website: <http://www.saqibooks.com/>

3.1.7 Haus Arabia Books

Launched in 2008, the Haus Arabia Books imprint was originally a joint venture between Haus Publishing and Arcadia Books, acquiring most of its fiction from the AUCP and also acting as AUCP's exclusive UK distributor. Arcadia are now no longer involved, and Haus Arabia is now an imprint of Haus Publishing exclusively but still works very closely with AUCP and acts as a distributor for many of their titles. They are supported in selecting what they describe as 'some of the best new writing from Egypt, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria and Algeria', by a panel of expert advisors in the UK, such as the literary critic and Mahfouz expert, Professor Rasheed El-Enany, director of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. So far their list is earning praise for its quality, and there are high hopes for the development of this relative newcomer on the scene.

Website: <http://www.arabiabooks.co.uk/>

3.1.8 Garnet Publishing / Ithaca Press

Formed in the early 1990s and Lebanese owned, Garnet Publishing focuses on the Arab world. Ithaca Press, their academic imprint, has been publishing on the Middle East since the 1970s. Garnet Publishing specializes in trade books, with a particular interest in the Middle East, and publishes titles in the fields of architecture, art, fiction, cookery and travel, and also in the areas of the culture, heritage and history of the Middle East. The press has a small but distinguished list of translated Arabic fiction, including the *Great Books of Islamic Civilisation* series of literary classics.

Website: <http://www.ithacapress.co.uk/>

3.1.9 Bloomsbury Publishing

One of the highly commercial UK majors, Bloomsbury had only delved into publishing Arabic writing in translation with titles by Hanan al-Shaykh and Mourid Barghouti, until embarking on their collaboration with the Qatar Foundation in 2008, and becoming involved in the Beirut39 project. Initiated by the Hay Festival, this is a selection of 39 Arab authors under the age of 39, with an anthology featuring them published simultaneously in English and in Arabic in 2010. Translators for the project were hand-picked by the bilingual Egyptian Bloomsbury novelist Ahdaf Soueif. The anthology was funded by Arts Council England, the British Council, and the English PEN Writers in Translation programme, which caused quite a stir among the smaller publishers in the field, given that, as the publisher of JK Rowling, Bloomsbury are presumed not to be in need of public subsidy.

Website: <http://www.bloomsbury.com/>

3.1.10 Other UK publishers with Arabic titles

Other UK publishers with Arabic titles in English are:

Quartet

Comma Press

Viking

Serpent's Tail

Bloodaxe

Arc Publications

Telegram

Black Swan

Aflame

Lime Tree

Websites

eXchanges, Journal of Literary Translation

<http://exchanges.uiowa.edu/hackwork/>

InTranslation at Brooklynrail.org

<http://intranslation.brooklynrail.org/>

New Arabic Books

<http://www.britishcouncil.org/newarabicbooks.htm>

Poetry Translation Centre

<http://www.poetrytranslation.org/>

Transcript – Europe's Online Review of International Writing

<http://www.transcript-review.org/>

Words Without Borders

<http://wordswithoutborders.org/>

3.2 Key publishing issues

3.2.1 Selection process

Almost without exception the writers, translators and academics interviewed for this study bemoaned the impact of the commercial imperative on the type of Arabic literature chosen for translation and publication by the major presses. Paul Starkey talks of 'an inevitable tendency among publishers to latch on to anything that looks like being the "flavour of the month", regardless of whether it has any literary (or other) merit. But then, they are in business to make money!' Marilyn Booth, the acclaimed translator and scholar of Arabic literature at Edinburgh University, rails eloquently against what she terms the 'orientalist ethnographicism' and 'memoir fixation' at play in the selection, promotion and reviewing of Middle Eastern literatures.¹⁰ As translator Catherine Cobham underlines in an interview for this study, 'Readers as well as publishers tend to go for content above literary/poetic quality in the case of Arabic literature, and look for and comment on how the society and especially religion and gender relations are portrayed in the literature.'

In her essay 'The Muslim Woman as Celebrity Author and the Politics of Translating Arabic: Girls of Riyadh Goes on the Road', translator Marilyn Booth says:

What little the mega-publishers have accepted from the realms of translated Arabic

¹⁰ For a detailed, erudite and profound exploration of this notion and this phenomenon, see Booth's essay 'The Muslim Woman as Celebrity Author and the Politics of Translating Arabic: Girls of Riyadh Goes on the Road', *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6:3 (Fall 2010).

fiction has been strongly subject to the search for commercially successful works and to popular political pressures to produce information about certain identity categories often conflated in public discourse: Arabs, Muslims, Middle Easterners. Aesthetic grounds have rarely been the basis for choosing texts for publication; rather, domestic political concerns and economic interests have been paramount in this particular literary marketplace.

Because relatively little (though increasingly more) Arabic literature is available in English translation, especially from commercial presses with marketing clout, every choice to translate something—and every choice of how to translate it—is politically loaded.¹¹

Interviewed for the British Council's New Arabic Books website in 2007, then Editorial Manager of Garnet Books and Ithaca Press Dan Nunn highlighted the challenges publishers face in the process of selecting, translating and publishing Arabic fiction. 'Because so little has been translated from Arabic to English the biggest problem was finding out enough about authors and their writing to be able to make a decision.'

Nunn describes receiving 'invaluable advice' from a team of academics specializing in Arab literature, who made recommendations about certain authors. '[Zakaria Tamer, Ibrahim Al-Koni and Miral al-Tahawy] already had work translated into English, so I was able to read and appreciate their work from the offset – although in future I hope to be able to also include authors who have not already been translated.'¹²

The fact that the publisher was in this case able to read the author in English before taking them on highlights the role of key players such as *Banipal* and the AUCP as ambassadors of Arabic literature to the UK publishing industry. Given that English is the lingua franca of the international publishing world and these publications are consulted as references by other publishers in this way, their editorial and translation quality takes on an even greater importance in this context.

However, when asked about AUCP's selection process for titles to translate, in the light of these concerns, Neil Hewison described a vigorous and careful selection process, using Arab readers with 'a very good sense of a Western readership', both to suggest titles for publication and to vet recommendations that have come via translators and so on. 'We listen very carefully to people like [the legendary translator and champion of Arabic literature in translation over the last 50 years] Denys Johnson Davies, or [award-winning contemporary translator] Humphrey Davies, but we still go to our local advisors for the final opinion.'

BQFP are seemingly even more passionate about using Arab expert advisors when selecting titles for translation into English. BQFP English books editor Jehan Marei explains:

BQFP's Arabic-speaking advisors are a fundamental part of our selection process, and particularly when the titles under discussion are Arabic-language titles. We regularly consult Arab literary figures for feedback and advice regarding the selection of works to

¹¹ Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 6:3 (Fall 2010).

¹² <http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-newarabicbooks-people-interviews.htm> accessed July 2010

be published in their original language as well as in translation, and also in the selection of translators themselves. They play, and will continue to play, a major supporting role in our decision-making process. In addition, the majority of the editorial staff at BQFP, in the Doha and London offices, are bilinguals or near bilinguals.

Haus Arabia Books are also gaining a reputation for being meticulous in their selection process and in their approach to writers. Harry Hall explains that it works in a very informal way as he outlines a model that should be adopted by the bigger corporate publishers.

The advisors are not required to draw up a list of recommended titles but rather will recommend something when they come across it. They're all fully briefed about the kind of books Haus Arabia seek to publish, and have a thorough knowledge of what's being published in the Middle East, literary trends and movements, as well as having an eye on what is being translated into other European languages from Arabic. Needless to say some advisors are more active than others, and we do not always act on their advice, but they provide an important source of information about what is available and which are the emerging talents.

3.2.2 Key influences on selection

Serious concern was also expressed by many respondents – writers and translators alike – about the lack of curiosity and effort on the part of UK publishers when faced with the task of scouting for Arab authors to translate. Information is filtered selectively through certain sources without enough direct reference to native speakers of Arabic familiar with the Arabic literary scene of various countries. The highly acclaimed Lebanese author Hanan al-Shaykh shares her view on the matter of selection of titles to be translated:

I would like to know about a group of judges, a panel, who would choose the best novels to be translated. You seldom find mainstream UK publishers who are willing to use [professional] readers to tell them about books – they just go for something that has already been translated. The Yacoubian Building was already a best-seller in Arabic and doing well in its French translation before it was picked up in the UK.

The apparent reluctance of some publishers to use Arabic speakers as their main advisors on selection is of concern, as is the notion that only a British or American translator/academic is capable of judging whether a book is worthy of translation and suitable for publication, which still seems to have wide currency. The assumption that the Arab world is empty of savvy native literati has the sad consequence that they are not even searched out, and some corporate publishers prefer to approach inexperienced newly graduated British Arabists to give them feedback on Arabic novels they are considering. This is of course also the case with other languages, not just Arabic. Hanan Al-Shaykh is one of many Arabic literary experts who feel that even the judging of the IPAF (known as the Arabic Booker) is not being taken seriously enough and that the winners so far have not accurately represented the best of new Arabic fiction. She would like to see a jury panel established – ‘dignified and judicious, with no agenda’ – to compile an ongoing list of the best new Arabic books for publishers to consult. Despairing at the current

selection process, and the quality of the available resources for publishers to read in English, as discussed above, she says:

I feel like saying to publishers, 'Go and look properly for someone to advise you, and be serious about it – rather than being sloppy about it because it's foreign.' They need to forget about the stories behind the book, the story of the author and so on, and look for good literature! But it's very difficult to find genuine interest from publishers. They should be turning to someone really selective and dedicated to quality, for advice.

Tony Calderbank is one of the more pragmatic (or perhaps more resigned) of the respondents on the subject of the financial constraints under which publishers operate. 'I think the market can only stand so much, so much in translation generally and so much translated from Arabic.' He does mourn the fact that publishing is in the hands of 'global businesses that have ruined the whole concept of a host of good independent book shops with myriads of small publishers all doing their own thing'. He highlights the case of *The Yacoubian Building*, and the very complex process that the publishers went through before it was accepted, the number of people who had to be convinced that it was a commercially viable proposition. 'And then, it having been taken on, the hundreds of thousands that were put into marketing it. This is not going to be happening to many Arab novels in translation.'

However, in contrast to many people in the field, he is happy overall with the Arabic titles that are trickling through into English.

I do think that generally the books that are translated are the ones that are making noises in the Arab world, the controversial best sellers like *Girls of Riyadh* or *The Yacoubian Building* being so widely read in Arabic clearly deserve to be translated so they can be read in English. I don't believe that we should just be translating arty stuff that no one in the Arab world is reading. I also enjoy those arguments about how there is a conspiracy theory and that the West chooses to translate things from Arabic that put the Arab world in a bad light. There will continue to be much discussion about this and it will never be resolved. Every translator I know has choice about what they translate. Even if they don't choose the text themselves and someone offers it to them they still have the choice to translate it or not. I would also say that the novels I am aware of having been translated over the last ten to fifteen years are generally novels worth translating, by a wide range of Arab writers, men and women, of all ages from across the Arab world, representing a decent selection of the literary output of their community.

He acknowledges that it still seems as difficult for an Arab writer to get translated and published as it ever did, but he is hopeful that, if increased funding is made available for activities around Arabic literature in translation, things could improve. 'The recent initiatives like Beirut39 and the Arabic Booker (IPAF) have improved things, perhaps, from the point of view of showcasing Arabic literature. So has the work of the British Council and the Arts Council England with the British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT).'

3.2.3 Sample translations for publishers

When dealing with previously untranslated authors, publishers are often forced to commission sample translations, a process which is in itself fraught with difficulty. This task should ideally be completed by an experienced translator who is either familiar with the writer's *oeuvre* already or is given the time and expenses to become so. In this ideal scenario the translator is therefore able, even whilst working on a dislocated portion of text, to do it justice. However, several of the writers and translators interviewed for this study have expressed concern that this job is in fact often done on a minimal budget, under great pressure of time, and not by the translator best equipped for the job. There are also very often editorial problems with the source texts due to the widespread lack of supportive editing for Arab writers, which exacerbates the challenge of dealing with texts at this point in their journey north. This aspect of the process of translation is ripe for development, so as to afford the writers a better chance of being accurately heard by their potential publishers, and the publishers a better chance of finding the next Alaa al-Aswany.

In order for these books not to be entirely grant-dependant, sales are obviously necessary. Hanan Al-Shaykh, whose books have not received any subventions: 'Any author, not only an Arab author, needs a little bit of commercial success – if you don't have that, they won't publish you again. So if you're not funded by the Arts Council or someone else, you must sell or you won't get published again. You must sell at least 2,500 - 3,000 copies of a book for it to be fully commercially viable.'

There are of course many titles translated from the Arabic that simply will not sell that quantity in the reality of the UK market and the prevailing cultural climate. Some of the tiny and heavily grant-dependent publishers may only sell 1,000 copies or less of any particular title. These are nevertheless important books and must continue to be funded, not only because those 1,000 copies have incalculable value for their readers, but because funding them is a gesture towards encouraging UK literary tastes to broaden and engage with different aesthetics and narrative structures. It is also important to note that these funded 'marginal' publications can turn out to be highly successful despite their humble beginnings. A good current example of this phenomenon is Hassan Blasim's short story collection *The Madman of Freedom Square*, translated by Jonathan Wright, (Manchester: Comma Press, 2009), and supported by English PEN's Writers In Translation Programme. Overlooked by the Beirut39 selection process and as yet unpublished in Arabic, Finland-based Iraqi writer Blasim was picked up by Comma Press's Lebanese literary advisor. He has since been called 'the best writer of Arabic fiction alive' (Robin Yassin-Kassab, in *The Guardian*¹³) and his book long listed for the 2010 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize.

3.2.4 Translator selection and editorial support

Bloomsbury's Bill Swainson is clearly proud of the intense work and thought that were put into the *Beirut39* anthology. He describes what sounds like an unusually thorough quality monitoring process, with clear echoes of the standards BQFP also apply. He describes spending 'six months working out with Hay and *Banipal*' who were 'the best translators in the field', and looking for 'translators who write really good English'. He also drew on his own knowledge of some of them, having been a judge for the *Banipal*

¹³ <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2010/jun/12/beirut-new-writing-arab-world>

Prize. It is worth noting here that Swainson was one of the judges despite not being an arabophone, something he shares with one of *Banipal's* founding editors. While it could be argued that judging translation from a language to which the judge does not have access would be questionable in the case of European languages, Banipal Prize juries appear to balance knowledge of the source language and high standards of literary and translation erudition.

Swainson elaborates on the editorial process: 'The question is, how can the editor contribute to honouring the intent of the writer in that collaboration with the translator? We used two expert readers on the translations, one for prose (looking at tone and accuracy) and one for poetry (which is the same but more difficult, as there is a bigger gap between the English and the Arabic here). Then it went to an Egyptian in-house editor of ours, who works with BQFP and whose English is superb. So there were very thorough checks and balances right down to the last, in a very tight time period – six weeks.' Certainly this tight time period was of concern to some of the translators of the book in question, with several reporting having felt uncomfortable with the short time given for final drafts. Perhaps it would have been advisable to have spent slightly less time on the search for the translators, and given them more time to work. There was also some frustration expressed by several over lack of access to the authors of the pieces they were working on, which is somewhat surprising in the context of this huge investment by Bloomsbury in translation quality.

Investment is, of course, the key word here, as Swainson acknowledges, referring to being 'lucky' in terms of the 'strong resources' they were able to bring to the project, partly as a result of subventions from English PEN, ACE and the British Council. Clearly, given the extra cost involved in publishing a translation in the first place, funding is essential if publishers are to be able even to consider these elaborate quality control methods. Swainson stresses that publishers are 'beginning to wake up to the Arab world and want to translate it', with the implication that standards could rise, and that 'these procedures could become standard' – but that it depends on who can bring what resources to bear.

Neil Hewison says that AUCP tries to match translators to writers as much as possible – 'if there was an infinite number of them you could do it always!' An important point here of course is that younger translators without second careers are less likely to be able to afford to take on AUCP translations given their pay rates.

Interviewed in 2007 by the British Council, AUCP Director Mark Linz lamented the scarcity of good translators, and of training for them. He noted the lack of a 'tradition' of quality Arabic to English translation as exists in longer-established language pairs. 'We've faced an enormous task finding, encouraging and working with translators these last 20 years. And I'm happy to say there is now a reliable, though rather small, group of really high quality literary translators. Having said all that, we could easily provide up to a dozen more translators with regular work!'

However, with AUCP rates currently running at almost exactly half the Translators Association recommended level, this is clearly not regular work someone could base their career and income on.

Translation process, editing and quality monitoring

Improving the quality of translations from Arabic can only be done by having more, and more experienced, translators. Peer reviewing and mentoring would no doubt help the younger translators develop their skills. When we translate books from European languages they often need very little editorial work, there's no reason why translations from the Arabic shouldn't be the same. (Harry Hall, Haus Arabia)

Several translators identify the tendency amongst writers to imagine, in their enthusiasm to get their work translated into English, that any translation is better than none. Whilst this perception arises from a fundamental misconception of the art of literary translation, it is a widespread one, and translator Marilyn Booth reports having frequently impressed on writers that it is better to remain untranslated than to be translated badly. Author Hanan al-Shaykh, however, is keenly aware of the importance of how her work is rendered into English, and values her relationship with her longstanding translator Catherine Cobham immensely. Not only does she rate Cobham as a writer in her own right – 'not a mere translator', as she unselfconsciously put it – but as a proof-reader and stylistic editor of her original Arabic texts, given the scarcity of editorial support for Arab writers.

AUCP are sometimes accused of publishing low-quality translations, but Neil Hewison describes turning down a lot of translators, based on their samples, to ensure quality. 'I don't like doing it, but I know I must.' He says that AUCP takes great care but 'of course we're not infallible.' He refers to several cases where AUCP translations have been criticized after translation, 'sometimes rightly so', and how they have worked on correcting errors at the next printing. Ultimately, he feels that the 'vexed issue of voice' and the fact that a translation is only ever an approximation, necessitate the publisher 'accepting that you'll lose something, and aiming to lose the minimum.'

But do older translators from elite cultural backgrounds offer the ideal 'voice' for a young Arab writer who uses very contemporary urban slang and subaltern sociolects? This is an issue which has arisen a lot during this research, not only in the context of Beirut³⁹, but of various AUCP titles. Marilyn Booth refers to the 'intersecting levels of the text [which] demand a translation practice that attends to the specificity of cultural usages in a globalized production scene, the clashing of languages (less a "clash of cultures" here than a "clash in culture"), and the myriad sources of youth speech'.¹⁴ But this translation practice does not always seem to be forthcoming in print.

¹⁴ Booth, 'Translator v. Author (2007): Girls of Riyadh go to New York'. *Translation Studies* 1:2 (July 2008): 197-211.

3.2.5 Editing process

The role of copy-editors cannot be overestimated; yet translators often complain either about a complete lack of editing, or of over-zealous editing which borders on re-writing, without any substantiation, let alone consultation with the translator.

A good copy-editor (which in my view means someone who combines a 'light touch' with a good feel for the work in question) can be a tremendous asset. A bad one, on the other hand, can be a disaster. One of my translations was once given to a copy-editor who was neither an Arabic nor an English native speaker, and who proceeded to rewrite the work, including changing paragraphs around, in order to structure the work in a more logical, less modernist, way. I was not amused, especially as the translation had already been vetted by the author! (Paul Starkey, translator)

Lack of Arabic editorial culture?

Translating and editing translations sometimes extends to editing the original. Hanan Al-Shaykh describes the collaborative process she has developed with her translator Catherine Cobham, who starts her translation by editing the original. This seemingly unusual practice is actually common in the Arabic context and adds an extra dimension to the task of the Arabic-to-English translator, who is very likely to be working on a text which has had no input beyond the author's. The translator therefore has to be on the look-out for problems ranging from the mundane – typos, omissions, repetition, mixed-up names, actions that do not quite add up – to the potentially profound questions of structure, pace, length, and so on. All of these are problems which might reasonably be expected to have been dealt with prior to publication of the original text. So should translators routinely be expected to have the skill and the time to do this as a normal part of their job? Indeed, are they even necessarily the best people to be editing the original Arabic text?

Lack of editorial culture is one of the problems that are being addressed by publisher training opportunities that have recently appeared in the Arab world, alongside other problems pervasive in the industry, such as copyright issues – *vis-à-vis* local and foreign authors, as well as translators into Arabic. Training for Arab publishers has been in recent years offered by various institutions and companies, both European (British Council, Goethe-Institut, Frankfurt Book Fair) and local, for instance training offered by Kitab, the company managing the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair. The Goethe-Institut in Cairo has, for example, provided training aimed at future publishing trainers, while Kitab has established a series of training courses for publishers addressing wider questions of running a publishing business and marketing. Kitab and the Abu Dhabi Book Fair have also pledged to address the problem of piracy, still rife in Arab publishing.

4 Dissemination and reception

4.1 Print runs and re-editions

Publishers are usually loathe to talk to researchers about print runs in specific terms, as the numbers can be all too clearly indicative of their expectations of a book's success and of the press's financial clout, market share and distribution possibilities. This can also be a sensitive issue with authors, touching on contractual issues. Whilst this secrecy is entirely understandable, it does fan the flames of suspicion around grant-dependent titles not being properly distributed or allowed to go out of print. The vexed question here is, does being on a list of grant-awards and in a bibliography mean a title is actually available to the reader? This is a key point, connected closely to the issue of grant dependence, that is of serious concern. There is anecdotal evidence of subsidized books having minuscule print runs, quickly disappearing and not making it into library holdings. Closer scrutiny of subsidized books, their print-runs and distribution patterns is clearly called for, as is the development of measures supporting marketing and promotion.

AUCP's Neil Hewison, however, was happy to discuss numbers:

There's no need to be shy about it! Our standard print run is fairly conservative, 1,000 in hardback (unless it's a Mahfouz or al-Aswany title). Whilst we do let some titles in other areas of our list such as economics drift out of print, with literature our intention is to keep it all in print. So if the initial hard back print-run of 1,000 sells out in a year we might do another 1,000 hardbacks – with the marketing department carefully considering the market on a case by case basis. But if it takes a couple of years (or even five, as it can) to sell the first 1,000 copies, we go straight into paperback. And that would be another 1,000 initially, then after that we reprint when they run out.

In response to comments that titles are allowed to go out of print, Hewison says:

A few titles have gone out of print, but certainly not recently! In the last 10 - 12 years we haven't been letting things go out of print unless there's a contractual rights issue that prevents us from reissuing the book, as was the case with a Yusuf Idris volume we no longer had rights to, so it was out of our hands. But so long as we are legally able to, we keep things in print.

According to Saqi's sales manager Ashley Biles, the print run for a Saqi Arabic translation can depend on various factors such as the format, support from UK retailers, and the likelihood of sales outside the UK.

We recently published 1,000 copies of a Saudi title in trade paperback format, a small figure for us, but we did not have US rights and the book had been widely available in the Middle East in Arabic. More typically we might look at a print run of between 2,000 and 3,000 copies, the higher figure if we thought we could get UK retail support from the chains, or we had US rights, or we felt there were extra sales to be had in Europe or the Middle East. And there are books for which we expect low interest, but which we feel need to be in print. Naturally I am loathe to quote specific examples, but recent print runs are more likely to be around 2,000 copies, but as I say we would expect to sell copies in the Middle East as well as the UK on this kind of figure.

It is interesting to note that Saqi's best-selling book in translation from Arabic, already into a second reprint, has been a bilingual volume of Arabic short stories (*Modern Arabic Short Stories: A Bilingual Reader*), which Biles says has been bought heavily in the UK and in US as a teaching aid in universities. 'We received no funding for this title at all. It can be done.'

Haus Arabia's Harry Hall was a little more guarded on numbers, saying that their print runs vary from '1,000 to 5,000, depending on pre-publication dues and promotions in Smiths or Waterstones'.

Small independent 'traditional' publishers can feel threatened by the rise of digital print and of print on demand (POD) publishers. In the words of the head of a small and precarious press, this enables some of his competitors to 'only bring out twenty copies at a time, enabling them to publish more titles per year, and look like much bigger presses as a result'.

Some titles have however gone into re-editions, for example Denys Johnson Davies's collection of short stories *Under The Naked Sky*. His unique reputation as a translator and as a selector of Arabic literature mean his work is, for many, the first and most reliable port of call. His translation of the seminal Sudanese writer Tayyeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* also continues to be reissued, having become established as one of the most provocative, arresting and challenging East-West fables in modern world literature.

Memory in the Flesh by Ahlam Mustaganami, a racy, accomplished Algerian novel and a best-seller across the Arab world, manages a skilled combination of linguistic experimentation and profound themes, whilst remaining accessible to a mass youth audience. Sexually explicit, politically daring, and lyrically written by a radical and charismatic young woman, it was significantly mistranslated by its first translator for AUCP, as acknowledged by Neil Hewison. AUCP then commissioned a retranslation by a senior British translator, producing a work which has in turn been criticized for employing an old-fashioned and inappropriate register for this very contemporary work. The book has survived all this, however, propelled presumably by the fame of the original and that of its female Muslim rebel author to sell well in English.¹⁵

Hanan al-Shaykh's *Only In London*, translated by Catherine Cobham, is a seminal Lebanese 'East-West' saga, depicting a multi-layered London with intersecting Arab and British lives, and featuring arguably the most complex portrait of a Western man by a female Arab writer ever. Masterfully translated by Cobham via an unusually dedicated collaborative engagement with the author and published by Bloomsbury, the novel has gained a substantial if elite British readership and gone into several re-editions.

Sales, bookshop and library uptake and shelf-life, and attitudes towards Arabic fiction

¹⁵ For an eloquently argued and illuminating exploration of the marketing of the celebrity Muslim woman author, see Marilyn Booth's forthcoming essay 'The Muslim Woman as Celebrity Author and the Politics of Translating Arabic: Girls of Riyadh Goes on the Road' *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 6:3 (Fall 2010).

I think realistically the market [for Arabic literature in translation] is fairly small, although I hope that current world events will mean that there is also a more general interest from the wider public. Certainly the books from Garnet's earlier Arab Women Writer's series [...] did quite well! Perhaps you should ask me again in a year's time. (2007 interview with then Executive Editor of Garnet, Dan Nunn¹⁶)

In summer 2010 he assessed the situation as follows:

Unfortunately, I ended up being quite disappointed at how things went. As a small press we found it very difficult to get much attention from the press or retailers which would have helped bring the series to the attention of the wider public. Where we did get interest it tended to be from people who already had an interest in Arabic literature – such as Middle Eastern papers and journals, specialist bookstores, etc – so I ended up feeling like we were preaching to the converted.

Senior editor at Comma Press Ra Page on bookshop uptake:

Individual booksellers – on a shop by shop level – aren't usually allowed to decide themselves what gets bought in, these days anyway. The repping goes centrally to head office, and there all translated fiction (except for Larsson-lookalikes) gets treated as unsellable. Arabic fiction is no worse or better than French fiction, say, or Spanish fiction.

Ashley Biles confirms Arabic writing is not being singled out here:

There's no particular struggle with the promotion of the Arabic books over all, no particular prejudice against it – it's a general prejudice against all translated literature! Shelf life is determined by sales, so shops return the books to us if they don't sell quickly. To sell books we need a virtuous circle of coverage provoking interest provoking more coverage and so on.

Some of the publishers interviewed here acknowledge that the larger chains do cater to the constituency of a particular branch to some extent – so the Kensington High Street branch of Waterstones tends to stock more Arabic translations than Eastbourne, for example. There is a sense that the buyers need to be persuaded, case by case, and that although they always have to justify whatever they take on to their own manager, this can sometimes be done. Of course this is a greater challenge for the independent publishers – as Saqi's Ashley Biles puts it, 'We do get good access to shops, but as a small independent we are up against the huge marketing budgets of corporate publishers.'

What can the corporate publishers buy with their big marketing budgets? £200 plus VAT turns a book around from spine-on to facing in a shop; to get a book on a table, or in a '3 for 2' offer, or near a point of sale is much more expensive; and to get a book into a shop window is well beyond the independent

¹⁶ <http://www.britishcouncil.org/arts-newarabicbooks-people-interviews.htm>

publisher's budget. Even Bloomsbury, publishers of JK Rowling and therefore seen by many of the smaller publishers as the archetypal big-budget house, turned to English PEN for marketing subventions for the *Beirut39* anthology. Part of the money they were awarded paid for a 3-page 'presenter' (promotional flyer for bookshops) for the anthology, which was a key marketing tool. Bill Swainson explains that, whilst an anthology of new Arabic writing would 'make most booksellers say, "Not for me," with this one they could see at a glance that here was something with serious backing – and so they supported it.' Building 'the whole thing as a package for the bookseller', is really, from this perspective, what publishing means, and 'we will go on publishing *Beirut39* very actively for the next two or three years.' The book will therefore have a 'life-span' of about 5 years, and for Swainson the subventions are therefore justified. While being quick to acknowledge that the project is 'not the be all and end all', he does see it as significant for boosting Arabic literature's place in the world market, for translation quality and so on. This view of funding money being well-directed in this case is of course not shared by all the smaller houses, hungry for funding to cover even basic publishing costs, and not even dreaming of producing glossy presenters for their publications. Neither is it shared by those in the field who were uncomfortable with the selection and judging process for *Beirut39* and the concentration of power in the hands of a few 'usual suspects' that it suggests. For the very small and highly grant-dependent publishers, competing in this market can seem impossibly challenging.

Ashley Biles has a more measured take on this:

Compared to 20 years ago, Waterstones' buyers are not encouraged to take many risks. In their heyday they would take all sorts of risky books, and sell loads of them. And once you narrow the range a shop will take it affects all sides. There is a corporate approach to bookselling nowadays, with accountants in charge – Waterstones would rather sell 200,000 copies of a Jade Goody memoir than worry about carrying a huge range of books. So everything else suffers: poetry, translations, unusual fiction, and so on.

This built-in conservatism in stockists, he explains, is a reflection of the 'resistance to fiction in the wider market place', which he is keen to emphasize is not just the fault of the individual shops, rather that 'they fill shelves according to what sells.' As both Biles and Page highlight with the best-selling examples they use, memoir-fixation is not just at play in the selection of Arabic or Eastern works for translation, as we have seen, but in the wider mass literature market.

As Bloomsbury's Bill Swainson told the participants of the British Council Translation Workshops in Cairo in January 2010, during his session on pitching potential Arabic books for English translation to publishers: 'Avoid talking about the book as an intellectual and an academic would; you must beam it up onto the planet where people go shopping, and answer the question "Why does this matter to someone in Sainsbury's in Watford?"'

But the answer is that most of the books relevant to this study do not matter to that particular consumer. Which is why Bloomsbury publish only a handful of translations per year, why translated literature usually

does not make it onto the shelves of Waterstones, and why the small presses that make up the majority of our bibliography are so dependent on various forms of subsidy. Presumably this is also why the Bloomsbury *Beirut*³⁹ anthology was marketed with the support of English PEN's Writers In Translation programme: it is a book that remains on the 'planet' where people read foreign literature in translation, and as such, it is emphatically not a supermarket product.

A middle way?

We can see the two extreme ends of publishing on display here. On the one hand, the corporate model which finds commercial publishers so duty-bound to their shareholders that they take no risks. At the other end of the spectrum are the tiny and non-commercial publishers seeking to get their entire cost covered who, it is argued by many in the industry, need to become somewhat more commercial. It seems that a middle way is the ideal, as perhaps represented by Saqi, Haus Arabia and others. It is also important to reiterate that literature is a cultural, not a commercial, product.

Is then the 'market-led' selection process an immutable fact of twenty-first century UK publishing? Should our choice of world literature be dictated by notions of supermarket stock and a presumed lowest common denominator of literary taste? A refreshing perspective is brought to the debate by Caroline McCormick, the former Executive Director of International PEN and founder of the world literature festival, Free the Word! Today she is a consultant working on a glittering array of high-level arts projects¹⁷ and is in the process of launching an Arabic literary translation initiative. McCormick rejects the way literature has been singled out among art forms in the UK for commodification: 'No other art form is as embroiled in its commercial side as literature is – so it is terribly underfunded compared to visual arts, dance, music, theatre and so on.' She also stresses the need for the industry to 're-brand the product' and stop referring to it as 'literary translation': 'Literary translation is an internal shorthand the industry needs to escape! We've got to start talking about 'the best in world literature' instead. Then the question to the public becomes, "Do you want to be able to read the best books in the whole world?"'

When McCormick set up the festival Free the Word! she brought together many venues across London and 'got them working together for the first time, and realized in the process that this is what can happen in a crisis – like minds come together and collaborate.' She is hopeful that the current funding crisis could lead to a new way of approaching world literature: 'Literature has backed itself into a corner financially ... [but] there could be a positive side to these lean times!'

4.1.1 Theatre and radio productions

Productions of foreign plays – whether on stage or on the radio – are rare in the UK and productions of Arabic plays even rarer. There is no database of translated texts produced on the radio or on stage, and all research for this section has consisted of anecdotal input. There were no reports of any radio readings or plays in our period, except a reading of *The Cairo Trilogy* by Mahfouz on BBC Radio 4 in 2006, on the occasion of his death, and a dramatization of the trilogy, recorded in Cairo with Omar Sharif, was broadcast in March 2011.

¹⁷ (see <http://beyondborders2010.com/about-beyond-borders/behind-the-organisation/> for a short biography)

Several theatrical projects have taken place, however. The Royal Court Theatre in London has a programme of inviting and translating international playwrights which has sometimes included Arabs, for example *Only a Permit*, a one-act play by Palestinian Susan Shalabi, translated by Catherine Cobham and performed in 2001. In November 2008 a series called *I Come From There: new plays from the Arab World* was also staged. Partly funded by the British Council, this included spin-off events such as readings from the work of legendary Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish, and contemporary Arabic music performances. Especially with the cross-over of genres drawing a different crowd, this is potentially an important way for Arabic literature to reach a wider public, and as such should be recommended.

In August 2010, the independent company Paper Tiger opened their production, *Burst*, inspired by Tayyeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*, at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.¹⁸

Hanan Al-Shaykh was one of the very first Arab writers to have her work translated for the UK stage. Two productions of her work were commissioned by the Hampstead Theatre: *A Dark Afternoon Tea*, a one-act play performed in February-March 1995, and the full-length *Paper Husband*, January-February 1996, both translated by Catherine Cobham. Al-Shaykh describes the significance of the occasion:

'[*Paper Husband*] was one of the first few [plays that were translated from Arabic into English: prior to that, in the history of UK theatre there had more or less only been one Arabic play, which was in English written by an Egyptian, and one or two things that went unnoticed, ran for a week or two and were not important. So it was a major step for a theatre to accept to take a chance on a full-length play, and it inspired great interest. It happened by accident, I never thought I'd write for the theatre.'

When interviewed for this report Al-Shaykh was working with the British director Tim Supple on a Dash Arts production of *1001 Nights*, which she was very excited about – 'a big production!' – which opened in June 2011 at the Luminato Festival of Arts in Toronto, before coming to the 2011 Edinburgh Festival.

4.1.2 Literary festivals and projects

There is a wealth of international literary festivals in the UK, some of which have featured Arab writers in the past ten years or so, and there have been some important initiatives aiming to increase their visibility. Key examples are *Banipal's* UK tours of Arab writers (for example with Emirati poets in 2010) and the Beirut39 project launched by Hay Festival, which has seen a number of young Arab writers perform in festivals and literary venues across the UK. A Palestinian Literature Festival was held in Manchester in 2006¹⁹ and an annual Arabic Arts Festival with a literature component is held in Liverpool. The first London Arabic arts festival was held in July 2011.

Beirut39 was a collaboration between the Hay Festival and Beirut World Capital of the Book in 2009 with other partners such as the British Council and Literature Across Frontiers. The project aimed to bring

¹⁸ <http://www.papertiger.org.uk/burst.html> includes trailer.

¹⁹ <http://www.mmu.ac.uk/news/news-items/517/>

together 39 of the most interesting writers of Arab heritage under 39 years of age in an anthology, and in a festival held in Beirut in April 2010. The listed authors were selected by a jury from submissions, and, although not a prize as such, inclusion in the list has potentially huge consequences for the writers. So the selection process has generated a great deal of controversy, with the best-selling Egyptian author Alaa al-Aswaany eventually resigning as jury head in protest against what he saw as an unfair system. Whilst the project was described by the organizers as an open competition, Al-Aswaany objected strongly to the long-list having been provided by *Banipal*, rather than being the result of an open process in the Arab world. Al-Aswaany claims that Hoda Barakat resigned from the committee for the same reasons. He feels it is a clear case of cliques controlling writers' exposure to media attention and publishing deals: 'In Egypt no one was aware of the mere existence of this literary contest, except people with good connections in the cultural field and a bunch of journalists.' Yet again, this dispute has meant that ill feeling about *Banipal* magazine's disproportionate influence over the selection of Arab writers is rife in the industry.²⁰

Dash Arts London have launched the Dash Arabic Series, which consists of four major commissions by artists from across the Arabic-speaking world, in addition to a wider programme of free events in London, at venues including the Barbican and the Roundhouse. Working with artists from North Africa, the near East and the Arab Diaspora, alongside key partners in the UK and abroad, they hope to be presenting 'innovative theatre, music and dance that has both classical richness and contemporary vitality'. Their mission, as they describe it, is to 'challenge pre-conceived notions of Arabic culture, offering new perspectives and unheard voices', via 'a powerful celebration of Arabic artistic identity'.

PalFest, (The Palestine Festival of Literature) describes itself as 'an annual, travelling, cultural road-show'. Its stated aims are 'to bring world-class cultural events to Palestinian cities; to give Palestinian students access to some of the finest authors working today, and to create a forum for the exchange of ideas and stories between International and Palestinian writers, readers and students.' The festival has been criticized, however, for having so much English-language content that it caters to 'English-speaking Palestinians from middle-class backgrounds, who are a minority in the West Bank' and constitutes an 'attack on Arabic' via the imposition of English.²¹ Curator Ahdaf Soueif has stated that the intention of PalFest is to be a way for English-language authors to see the reality of Palestine, so as to describe it to English-reading audiences (as per the third aim above), which may explain the predominance of English.²²

Other major UK literary festivals and venues have hosted Arab writers in the past few years: Edinburgh International Book Festival, Hay Festival, Ledbury Poetry Festival and Manchester Literature Festival.

Projects such as the travelling Reels Festival based in Edinburgh also bring Arab writers together with their UK colleagues. The 2011 Reels Festival was scheduled to travel to Syria and Lebanon, bringing local writers for a visit to Scotland, but the Syrian events were cancelled.

²⁰ <http://www.almasryalyoum.com/en/news/literary-dispute>

²¹ <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2010/05/20105983720185450.html>

²² <http://english.aljazeera.net/focus/2010/05/20105983720185450.html>

Ireland

In Ireland the two major literary festivals, Cúirt in Galloway and Dublin Writers Festival have been more international in the past than they are now. Cúirt hosted a number of Arab writers in 2006 and 2007 under the programming director Maura Kennedy, who later took her expertise and passion for international writing to Liverpool's creative hub, the Bluecoat. More recently, the Cork Literary Festival has taken on the international agenda and its 2011 edition featured the Syrian poet Mariam Al-Masri.

4.1.3 Promoting unknown writers to readers and publishers

There is a common festival strategy (as explored in the Turkish to English report) of featuring unknown foreign writers in joint appearances alongside known domestic ones, as a way of getting them exposed. So the Iraqi author Hassan Blasim appeared with David Constantine in Manchester in October 2009, and – not that it can be conclusively linked – he was on the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize 2010 longlist. These early appearances can prove to be crucial, as Hanan Al-Shaykh remembers. She describes an appearance she made at the prestigious Adelaide literary festival, early in her career, when her novel *Beirut Blues* was still just a manuscript. It was important to her to be heard not only by a large audience of readers, but by industry representatives, too. 'Because it was a very prestigious festival, my manuscript ended up getting fought over by four mainstream publishers, just because of that public appearance. So festivals are important, especially when you are not very well known.'

4.1.4 A forum for consciousness-raising by Arabs

At the beginning of her career, Al-Shaykh was acutely aware of her role as a rare representative of the Arab world, at a time when there was such limited access to Arab intellectual culture in the UK and Ireland. She was specifically interested in attending literary festivals for this reason, as a separate mission to promoting her own books. 'I was very proud that now they knew that the Arabs can laugh at themselves and be very frank – I was proud to help change preconceived ideas about us, and to escape ideas such as that the Arabic language is sacred because of the Quran – it was good to explain that Arabic was around for a long time before the Quran.'

In those early days, Al-Shaykh was debunking very basic myths about the homogenous lot of the Arab woman. She recalls being asked by audience members at events in the 1990s about her immigration status as a Muslim, and their astonishment at her liberal take on virginity and the veil. Whilst the typical festival audience has become much more savvy over the last fifteen years, Al-Shaykh is still educating people about the Arab world, albeit in a somewhat subtler way than before. She recounts wryly, and with tolerant resignation, the typical vision of her background that the audience bring: 'I am still often asked if I fought traditions to become a writer: people ask, "How did your father let you do that?" He was proud of me for being a journalist in fact – but people can't believe I didn't have to sneak out and become a writer in the west! That I was published in Lebanon already, and so on.'

She notices, however, that with her own personal success, and with the increased exposure of the Arab literary world over the last twenty years, she is now allowed to be more universal in the themes she tackles, and not always be trapped in writing 'as an Arab woman'. Her latest book *The Locust and the*

Bird: My Mother's Story has been well received by festival audiences around the anglophone world who relate to her mother's story, which she finds 'refreshing: a book is like a bridge between cultures, and shows that beyond the cultural stuff we are all human, and the same.'

Quality events? Value for money in lean times?

However, Al-Shaykh has some serious reservations about the attitude of some literary festival organizers to their writers: 'Some festivals don't take you seriously, they categorize and pigeonhole you. So if there's no genuine interest beyond that in who you really are and what you're really saying, why should we attend?'

These concerns were echoed by several of the other respondents. Specifically, there is fairly widespread concern at the selection of writers for these events, the type of events that are being put on, and their promotion. Al-Shaykh feels there is sometimes a laziness on the part of the organizers of literary festivals, or to put it more kindly, a lack of proper research. 'Nowadays I don't go to so many festivals because I'm so busy, and I would rather write. Sometimes when I'm invited to a festival [and turn it down] they say "But we don't know who else to ask!" They haven't heard of anyone else! So I feel like saying, go and do your homework!'

These concerns mirror those about the selection of what to publish, and the two processes are, of course, closely linked. There is a movement towards staging high quality challenging events that are more carefully curated than some have been in the past, and coordinated within a wider context, as exemplified by the work of Literature Across Frontiers and by Caroline McCormick's plans. This is clearly especially important in the current lean times of arts funding in the UK and Ireland. Funding for actual publications is sparse and hard for publishers to come by, and translations from the Arabic frequently fail to be published for want of a sum which is a minute fraction of that spent on a festival. So, for example, a book may be cancelled at quite a late stage due to a shortfall of £2,000, which is roughly what the Beirut³⁹ event spent on each panel member's attendance at an event with an audience of ten people. Although this is an extreme and unfortunate example, it helps to explain the exasperation of the small publishers who are starved of such relatively small but essential sums. The concern is that there is a disproportionate lack of funding for actual books, compared to funding available for festival appearances and touring, as Comma Press's Ra Page stresses: 'You have the ridiculous situation of dozens of Arabic writers being regulars on the festival circuit, appearing at festivals in the UK, Europe and America all year long, because of the demand by Radio 4-type listeners for that live experience!'

Crucially, however, the question we must ask here is what constitutes value for money in arts funding, and can that ever really be assessed? From the perspective of a literary festival organizer, a book that is published with a substantial subsidy and then only bought by twenty people may be considered a waste of money. So the solution seems to be a balance of funding, across the board, which – ideally – allows all aspects of the literary industry to flourish.

4.2 Media and critical reception

I have heard people say that they don't like Arab novels, they're sentimental, immature, poorly crafted, have weak character development. Others tell me "that wasn't bad" or "I quite liked that." I have rarely found anyone who has raved and raved about an Arab novel or an Arab novel that has reached the heights of the Russians or the Latin Americans. (Tony Calderbank, translator)

I wish translated Arabic literature was reviewed more widely in the press, and again for its literary qualities and not just for its content, or the 'courage' of the author in portraying such topics, etc. Reviews of Arabic literature, when they occur, are almost always fairly superficial and generally favourable, and it would be much more useful if reviewers felt able to be more analytical, and critical where appropriate.

On one level I'm surprised when I am recognized at all as I don't really expect to be. I do, however, find it annoying when the translator's name is omitted altogether from the title pages of the book, and also when reviewers appear to think the book has been written originally in English. (Catherine Cobham)

Marilyn Booth offers a comprehensive and fascinating analysis of the typical media review culture of translated Arabic literature in her essay 'The Muslim Woman as Celebrity Author and the Politics of Translating Arabic: *Girls of Riyadh* Goes on the Road':

As is so often (and unfortunately) the case with translated literature, this novel in English has been mostly reviewed or commented on by individuals who do not read Arabic and often have scant knowledge of Arabic literary culture. This tends to yield breathless celebrations of Alsanea as a brave lone voice, and ludicrous claims that this novel has helped to revive the (apparently moribund?) Arabic novel as a literary form (Zoepf 2007). Censorship and the repression of cultural production and exchange in the author's home country (the story of the novel) are constant themes in reviews of the book and in profiles of the author, with emphasis on clandestine circulation, death threats, and high prices paid on the black market—though the novel's subsequent appearance in Saudi Arabia and support for it there are also mentioned, possibly complicating readers' images of the region (see e.g. Thomas 2007; Zoepf 2007; Kennedy 2009). Reviewers assumed oppression and repression as uniform facts of life for females across the board in Saudi Arabia, despite the privileges of the novel's female characters and Alsanea's own life history in a family of physicians, female and male. As a graduate of King Saud University in Riyadh, she is living proof that Saudi women can and do attend university. Yet, that Alsanea apparently breaks the mold (of readers' or at least journalists' expectations, if not of Saudi women's lives) somehow seems to be the exception that proves the rule.²³

One of the central issues of concern in this context is that of the reviewers typically ignoring the work of the translator altogether. Surprisingly, this can often be the case even in serious literary publications, such

²³ Journal of Middle East Women's Studies 6:3 (Fall 2010).

as Al-Jadid reviewing Gada Samman and even some reviews in the Rochester University translation website Three Percent²⁴. There is also a tendency for reviewers to comment on the quality of the translation without having read (or being able to due to the language barrier) the original work, which annoys many translators. More important than literary translators' fits of pique or feelings of invisibility, however, is the absolute lack of serious peer review of their work that this implies, and its consequences for quality control. Out of this unsatisfactory situation has come the suggestion for a serious Arabic translation review journal to be launched, as discussed in more depth in section 4. Not only would this publication help to foster a more intelligent critical review culture of Arabic, but of literary translations in general, it is hoped.

The impact of reviews and media coverage on sales

Bill Swainson of Bloomsbury is unequivocal about the impact of reviews on sales: 'No reviews, no sales — it's very simple. All shops are much more conservative than they used to be, so creating a publicity platform is key.' He goes on to explain that, for Bloomsbury, both print media and specific radio coverage such as on the BBC World Service, or Radio 4's *Front Row* are 'enormously important'. Key though, he feels, are literary blogs, which have gone from being 'occasionally interesting sidelines to the main means of reviewing!' The impact of coverage in specialist media such as *Banipal*, of course, also counts, but not as much as certain literary blogs written 'as if to their friends, or their book club', such as *dovegreyreader scribbles*, *London Jottings*, *Stuck In A Book*. But he is the only publisher interviewed here who expressed this; this only seems relevant to the mainstream corporate publishers, with their big marketing budgets. For smaller presses the picture is more complex and more blurred:

The effect of reviews on sales is variable and hard to follow, certain types or sizes of review have a magic bullet effect, others are less easy to trace, but all have an effect. Reviews are REALLY important, but because they are a manifestation of the book being read (and debated), and they are the starting place for other people to read, and debate them, not for their impact on sales. (Ra Page)

AUCP's Neil Hewison says it is very difficult to relate reviews to sales specifically. 'We have to hope! The more known and respected the venue of the review, the better, so for example the recent review of *East Winds West Winds* in *The Independent* was good. There must be some correlation, as many more people are reading *The Guardian* or *The Independent* than are browsing our catalogue.' Hewison was particularly pleased that the review in question praised Paul Starkey's translation — 'it's always nice when the reviewer compliments a translator.' However he also points out that the 'best compliment a reviewer can pay is, as someone said recently of one of our books, that you didn't realize you were reading a translation!'

Haus Arabia's Harry Hall describes the impact of reviews on sales as negligible, pointing out that UK and Irish reviews 'don't have nearly the impact they do in the United States.' He estimates that a review

²⁴ <http://www.aljadid.com/books/0525jensen.html>, <http://www.rochester.edu/College/translation/threeppercent/>

might provoke the sale of as few as ‘fifty or so copies, though it’s very difficult to measure, especially as the reviews are now archived online, so they have a more lasting impact.’

Saqi’s Ashley Biles reports that the impact of reviews on sales is mixed, and is ‘a complex issue’, as fiction in translation is not what tends to get read in general, with only the odd exception capturing the public imagination. As we have already seen, independent publishers like Saqi start from a very low base in terms of sales, as they are up against such stiff competition.

You would think that a book would get picked up if it gets a very good review, but it doesn’t necessarily. A book can be very widely reviewed and still not sell. Some very negative comments were made on the radio about one of Saqi’s books but it didn’t matter, didn’t affect sales at all. So it’s not always a causal effect. A rave review can happen but then you sell 14 in the next 2 weeks — or conversely a review can be key.

Features instead of reviews

What most publicists find more reliable, therefore, is a feature, especially when working with a new author, or one who’s being reintroduced. Interviews and features seem to work better than reviews, Biles says, ‘as one gets a sense of who the person is and what they’re doing’. So here we see what Booth terms ‘the memoir complex’ at work, the audience’s interest in the story of the author, and their conflation of it with the actual fiction they will be reading.

Whilst a feature in one of the book supplements of papers such as *The Independent*, *The Guardian on Saturday*, *The Financial Times* can be very valuable to Saqi, Biles says that a feature in the *Metro* has ‘a brilliant effect’. Joumana Haddad’s latest Saqi publication, about the ways Eastern and Western men see Arab women, was recently profiled in both *Grazia* magazine and *The Guardian* at the same time, and those two features will surely help sales more than a review of the actual book would, Biles affirms.

Another example Biles offers is the Saqi title, *The Arabs and the Holocaust*, which ‘rather even-handedly puts the case that there isn’t just one universal Arab view of the Holocaust. After initial fears due to the title, and a very slow start with not much coverage at all, two or three months after it was published it is now beginning to build up sales. This is, in this particular case, a result of a few appearances by the author that then generated reviews and coverage.’

Reviews as promotional material for further editions

Reviews are of course very useful to publishers in terms of providing promotional material for the paperback edition of a book — providing it sells enough hardbacks to get that far. Harry Hall:

Reviews of hardbacks are the most important, it gives you something to use on the paperback edition. Booksellers are more easily persuaded to promote the paperback with good review coverage plastered on the cover than they’re willing to stock a hardback that has just been reviewed in the national press.

4.3 Public and private sector support for literary exchange and translation in the UK and Ireland

In mapping translation flows, understanding the wider context of literary exchange - how it accommodates and advances the practice of translation and how it can influence the direction of translation flows - is crucial, and this is why this study's scope is not limited to the translation and publication of books. Literary exchange can have an impact on all the stakeholders whose interests intersect in the sphere of literary translation, including individual practitioners on the one hand, and audiences on the other. Government agencies and bodies involved in international cultural relations can make an invaluable contribution by working both bi- and multi-laterally and by investing in cultural development in countries and regions which lack developed arts infrastructures, as opposed to merely promoting and exporting their own cultural product.

British Council

In the United Kingdom, the British Council is the body responsible for the UK's international cultural relations, while the Arts Councils of the four countries forming the United Kingdom all have developed an international arts policy and support (mostly inbound) international activities and, in the case of Arts Council England, inbound translation.

In the devolved countries the British Council works through its offices in Scotland and Wales and in cooperation with the Arts Councils. In partnership with Arts Council Wales it has formed a specialist body, Wales Arts International, which deals with international promotion of Welsh arts abroad.

The work of the British Council has in recent years included literary exchanges with the Arab world in the form of various projects. These include several literary translation workshops, in particular the pilot Arabic - English workshop held in Cairo in January 2010 with emerging translators working from and into the two languages. Other British Council-supported projects were the Arab World Market Focus at the London Book Fair 2008 and related activities at the Cairo Book Fair where the UK was subsequently a guest of honour, the *Banipal* UK tour of Arab authors, and the Hay Festival's *Beirut39* project which has selected 39 Arab authors under the age of 39 to highlight the new Arab literary generation and showcase their work in an anthology published by Bloomsbury.

Arts Council England

Arts Council England, the national development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from the Government and the National Lottery, has been the primary source of funding for literary translation activities in England. It is in its territory that the majority of publishers working with translations are concentrated. Only a handful of publishers outside England, and especially London, fall into this category and the Arts Council's support for publishers engaged in translation has been used to fund several books of translation from Arabic, and has contributed to the creation and running of important initiatives, as mentioned above. During our period, Arts Council England funded literary

translation by awarding grants for projects, as well as funding publishers under a scheme of annual grants. ACE's award to Arabic translation projects from 2006 to 2010 inclusive totaled £145,487.

As is widely known and lamented, Arts Council England took a budget cut of £112.5m when funds were redirected to London's 2012 Olympics Games budget as well as further cuts as part of government spending plans. An Arts Council press release in summer 2010 on behalf of the broader UK cultural sector leadership made very sobering reading, urging the prime minister to take on board that:

while the cultural sector is willing to play its part in the country's economic recovery with realistic cuts, the 25% - 40% cuts being proposed would be catastrophic as they come on top of 3.5% cuts this year as well as the cultural sector's £322 million contribution to the costs of the Olympics. The directors warn that the cumulative effect of these cuts could lead to the closure or partial closure of leading national museums, galleries and theatres, as well as of many arts organisations across the country. The national directors are deeply concerned that the cultural sector's unique model of mixed funding, which is admired all over the world, will be severely damaged by the depth and extent of the cuts being discussed. The government's proposal that renewed efforts should be made to attract philanthropy is welcome, especially if it were to be accompanied by tax incentives. However, such new giving cannot be expected to make good immediate shortfalls, a view shared by a group of leading British philanthropists who have written to the government to express this view. The arts are a great British success story. The UK has the largest cultural economy in the world relative to GDP, and every £1 invested in culture produces £2.²⁵

In 2010-2011 Arts Council England implemented a new system of support for organisations, introducing the National Portfolio Funding as part of a major arts funding restructure. Literature and translation fared relatively well, gaining 11% as opposed to cuts in all other art forms which have seen many visual and performing arts organisations lose their funding completely or suffer cuts to their budgets. Throughout this time, the Arts Council sustained its support to organisations in the literary translation sector which has generally benefited from the new funding arrangements.

English PEN - Writers in Translation Programme

From 2012 the main source of funding for publishers of translated books will be the English PEN. As a result of Arts Council England's funding restructure and introduction of its National Portfolio Funding, English PEN has taken over the administration of ACE's funding for translation, as an extension of its Writers In Translation Programme which has so far funded marketing costs.

Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation

Among private sponsors, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation has become an important player in the literary translation field since it identified translation as one of its key priorities and started supporting and partnering on relevant initiatives. It has been instrumental in the setting up of the Literary Translation

²⁵ <http://press.artscouncil.org.uk/Press-Releases/You-can-cut-us-but-don-t-kill-us-say-the-UK-s-cultural-leaders-427.aspx>

Centre at the London Book Fair, a project co-funded by Arts Council England and managed by the book fair with a consortium of organisations including the British Council, British Centre for Literary Translation, English PEN, Literature Across Frontiers, Translators' Association and Wales Literature Exchange.

Northern Ireland

The Arts Council of Northern Ireland is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland, offering a broad range of funding opportunities. It cooperates with cross-border agencies in the Republic of Ireland, especially in matters related to the Irish language. Its International Policy document states the Council's "commitment to, and ambitions for, trans-national interaction for the arts sector". The Council's aim is to "ensure that Northern Ireland's arts organisations, artists and arts can connect internationally and develop an international perspective through profiling work, exchanging ideas and developing relationships". This aim is achieved through close cooperation with, among others, the British Council, Visiting Arts and the other UK and Irish arts councils. ²⁶

There are no publishers, organisations or initiatives known to the authors and relevant to this study in Northern Ireland.

Scotland

The Scottish Arts Council, recently transformed into Creative Scotland, a body which provides public support for all art forms, including film, has been keen to encourage international literary exchange through projects. As well as subsidising the Edinburgh International Book Festival, it has supported international collaborations between the Scottish Poetry Library and Literature Across Frontiers, which included participants from Arab countries working with Scottish participants on poetry translations, and, in 2011, the Reels Festival which brought together Scottish and Arab poets and musicians, and resulted in published translations of their work.

Wales

In general, there is considerable interest in translation in Wales, as - with vibrant literary cultures in two languages - there is a heightened awareness of, and interest in, literary exchange. There is an active international outlook and interest in other literatures, with a particular focus on lesser-used languages, and support for author events and exchange by organisations such as Wales Literature Exchange and the writers' centre Tŷ Newydd in Gwynedd. A recent development has seen the setting up of Translators' House Wales initiative at Tŷ Newydd, which brings translators to workshops in Wales. The Welsh Books Council is the funder for publishers who produce translations.

None of these initiatives have included Arabic to date and no translations from Arabic has been published at all in Wales in the last twenty years, although magazines have on occasions published poems in

²⁶ *Artform and Specialist Area Policy 2008 - 2012: International Arts*, <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/artforms/pdfs/International%20Arts.pdf>

translation from Arabic, namely by Palestinian poets Ehab Bessaiso in *Planet* and Nawal Nafaa in *Poetry Wales*.

Wales has however significantly contributed to UK's activities in this field by hosting the EU-funded Literature Across Frontiers - European Platform for Literary Exchange, Translation and Policy Debate, with its activities in the Arab world and involvement with Arab authors, translators and publishers.

Republic of Ireland

In Ireland, the incidence of publishing translations - with the exception of translations between Irish and English - is extremely rare and is limited to less than a handful of (mostly poetry) publishers, for example Dedalus Press, and special projects such the European poetry series published by Southword Editions, based at the Munster Literature Centre in Cork, on the occasion of European Enlargement in 2005.²⁷ Even such initiatives focus mostly on translation from European languages.

Ireland Literature Exchange, promotes Irish literature abroad and literary translation in the Republic of Ireland, offering translation grants to foreign and Irish publishers. To date, no application has been made for translation from Arabic and to the authors' knowledge, no translations from Arabic have been published in Ireland.

4.4 Public and private sector support for translation and dissemination of literature from the countries of origin

Arab world funders

While state and private financial support for literary events, translation and publishing has become available in recent years in the form of various initiatives such as the programmes run by the National Translation Centre of Egypt, and Kalima or the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Makhtoum Foundation in the United Arab Emirates, all target inbound translation and none offers support for translation out of Arabic into other languages. There is consensus that Arab institutions need to address this matter urgently, and especially translation into English. The first step in this direction is the announcement of the establishment of the *Library of Arabic Literature* (LAL) by the New York University Press and the New York University of Abu Dhabi. This project aims to publish English translations of the great works of classical Arabic literature in bi-lingual editions, starting initially with thirty-five titles. LAL will cover a range of genres, including poetry, fiction and non-fiction works on religion, philosophy, law, science, history.

No support is provided for the translation of contemporary titles, and even the AUCP receive almost no subventions, despite their crucial role in promoting Arab literature to the international community. Neil Hewison agrees that literature in translation is an art form that needs to be treated as such and funded, not just treated as another commodity and left to fend for itself in the market place, but this funding is very rarely forthcoming from the Arab world. The translation of Rasha el-Ameer's *Judgement Day* by

²⁷ See list of the books on <http://www.munsterlit.ie/Bookstore%20Translations.html>

Jonathan Wright is a rare example: an organization called Haya Bina are paying for the translation and ‘a bit more for editorial costs’. AUCP were already in negotiation with the author’s agent when they were approached by the organization – ‘I don’t know much about them – and it doesn’t often happen! I can’t think of any other examples,’ says Hewison ruefully. The Sawiris Foundation literary prize, for example, founded by a branch of one of the richest families in Egypt, has no budget to fund the translation of the winning title. So Hewison recounts the sad case of Nubian author Haggag Oddoul winning the prize three years ago for his ‘massive novel’, which would have been very expensive to translate due to its length. When the Sawiris Foundation were approached to fund the translation as an extension of the award and had no budget for this ‘it struck us that this was shortsighted of them, so we started looking around for funders elsewhere.’ AUCP searched for Nubian business people who might want to ‘underwrite Nubian literature – but so far nothing’s been found so we can’t begin translating it.’

The Naguib Mahfouz Fund for Translation

The Naguib Mahfouz Fund for Translation was set up in the late 1990s, to be administered by the AUCP, but it has never taken off due to lack of funds. Since 1996 the AUCP has been giving the Naguib Mahfouz medal for literature annually, and part of the reward for the winner is to be translated and published by AUCP. Mahfouz himself recognized the valuable role of translation, and even its role in his Nobel prize award, and wanted to see more Arab literature translated into European languages. So the fund was set up in Mahfouz’s name. Neil Hewison: ‘I think I’m right in saying that some of the start-up money came from Mahfouz himself (either from his Nobel prize winnings or his book sales income) and an appeal for more funds went out.’ However, funds have not materialized, so the fund has never been able to be launched in anything but name. This is an obvious and deserving candidate for Arab world funding – an easy way for the ‘father of the Arabic novel’ to be honoured and remembered.

Subsidies offered by the governments of the Emirates of Abu Dhabi and Sharjah

The United Arab Emirates have made steps towards providing support for translation from Arabic in the form of two schemes offered by the book fairs of Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. The Abu Dhabi scheme, *Spotlight on Rights*,²⁸ was launched in 2008 and focuses on rights sales and publishers attending the fair may apply for a subsidy towards the purchase of rights for books they plan to translate, including books translated from Arabic. A new subsidies scheme was launched at the 2011 Sharjah Book Fair to celebrate its 30th anniversary. The scheme allows publishers attending the fair to apply for translation costs of books they plan to translate from or into Arabic. Both schemes aim to support translation between Arabic and other languages as well as boosting numbers of attending publishers by making only those attending the fair eligible to apply.

Other Arab world initiatives

²⁸ For details see <http://www.adbookfair.com>

The Mohammed bin Rashid Al Makhtoum Foundation offers a training programme aimed at improving the quality of translation to and from Arabic. This is however only open to citizens of one of the twenty-two countries of the Arab League and therefore excludes native-speakers of the target languages.²⁹

In discussion about funding from the Arab world, the vexed question of the ethics of accepting financing from certain sources in the region inevitably comes up. Informed by her experiences of the persecution of writers during her time as Executive Director of International PEN, Caroline McCormick is very clear that certain funders, however tempting they appear, are ultimately unacceptable due to the nature of the regime they represent. She stipulates that great discretion must be exercised when accepting funding, whether from states, corporations, or individuals:

The problem is that many Arab writers are so disaffected from their governments that they would reject this idea, and correspondingly quite a lot of the writers whose works are promoted by Arab governments are those who toe the party line in some sense.

Censorship and other forms of control of free speech are still widespread in the Arab world, and so support from at least some Arab governments would be viewed with suspicion by the global literary community. IPAF winner Abdo Khal being considered too critical and controversial by the Saudi Government, the banning of the work of various other IPAF shortlisted authors, or the widespread criticism of then director of the Egyptian National Translation Centre Gaber Asfour's acceptance of a place in the January 2010 'crisis' cabinet of President Mubarak are just a few examples substantiating this view. At the same time, the mere existence of a prize such as IPAF which indirectly challenges censorship is a very positive development.

4.4.1 Publishers' perspectives on subsidies

Haus Arabia have not received funding for any Arabic translations so far, although as Harry Hall points out, 'we work with the AUC Press who are obviously part of a larger organization', so they are not as vulnerable as some of the smaller independents. He feels there is great scope for the improvement in the way translations are funded:

Ideally I'd like to see funding bodies established along European lines where, once the rights have been bought and the translation commissioned, everything can be submitted. The funding bodies should have a clear idea of what they are looking for — that's to say it shouldn't be up to the publisher to justify why they believe a book deserves to be funded. What should be avoided at all costs is for funding bodies to list titles that would receive funding before the rights have been bought for translation. What you end up with is a list of 'approved' titles that hurts the integrity of the list.

Like AUCP, Haus Arabia tries to cut translation costs by finding publishing partners in the US and the Middle East.

²⁹ See <http://www.mbrfoundation.ae/English/Culture/Pages/Turjuman.aspx>.

For Rafik Schami's new book, for instance, we received a grant from the Goethe Institut that covers a considerable portion of the costs, and we'll then share the remainder with Interlink (to whom we've sold the North American rights) and AUCP, who have taken the Middle East. This is one reason why we don't publish Haus fiction titles in the US — we would have to sell a lot of books to gain as much as finding a publisher who will buy a sub-license and cover half the cost of an £8000 translation bill.

Former executive editor of Garnet, Dan Nunn elaborates:

For me, the main things that could be done to help the situation would be funding for translations to help make publishing Arabic fiction less risky for publishers and then, even more importantly, assistance with marketing [as was the case with Bloomsbury's Beirut39 anthology]. Translation support and editorial support would be helpful of course, but I actually think the quality of recently published translations is pretty high — the problem is getting people to read it in the first place.

4.4.2 Translators' perspectives on public funding

Not only the publishers but the translators interviewed here were adamant that Arabic literary translation is badly underfunded:

No one is willing to pay a translator fairly for their work. I think that very few people who are not actually involved in translation actually understand what is involved in the process. People seem to think that it is a fairly straightforward process, like looking at a text and then saying it in another language, without too much ado. The challenge is how to get the translator true recompense for their task. (Tony Calderbank)

No, I don't think there is enough funding. Far too much of my work ends up being *pro bono*, and even then I am forced to grovel. (William Hutchins)

Given the realities of the publishing market, in order for translators to be paid more, publishers would need to be funded by other sources, and quite possibly by sources, like the Arts Council, which impose Translators Association recommended rates of pay. There are also, of course, a range of projects that can be funded to train literary translators and develop their skills.

4.5 Literature and Translation Prizes

Literature and translation prizes are considered a form of economic support, in addition to assuring visibility and expression of recognition for the awarded author or translator. What other functions could translation prizes perform? Some respondents felt it would be useful if they offered feedback on the listed translations, whether or not they had won, as a peer review quality control method. However, those translators who are judges for the prizes stressed the impossibility of this, in practice, given the constraints of time.

International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF, also known as the 'Arabic Booker')

Launched in 2007 in Abu Dhabi, and the first prize awarded in 2008, the IPAF is run with the support of the Booker Prize Foundation in London and the Emirates Foundation in Abu Dhabi. The shortlisted finalists for the prize each receive \$10,000, with the winner receiving an additional \$50,000. Authors can look forward to increased book sales both within the Arab world and internationally, through translation, which is assured for the winner. In addition to the annual prize, the IPAF supports literary initiatives, and in 2009 launched its inaugural *nadwa* (writers' workshop) for a group of aspiring writers from across the Arab world. The workshop – the first of its kind for Arab writers – took place in Abu Dhabi under the patronage of His Highness Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al-Nahyan. It resulted in eight new pieces of fiction by the participants, which were published in a bilingual Arabic and English edition in January 2011 by Saqi Books, *Emerging Arab Voices*³⁰. This means that the award is particularly relevant to our context here, as it primarily promotes the winners in the anglophone world.

2010 Winner

Yusuf Zeydan, *Beelzebub*, Dar al Shorouk Cairo, (Egyptian)

Shortlist

Mohammad Al Bisatie, *Hunger* (Egyptian)

Fawwaz Haddad, *The Unfaithful Translator* (Syrian)

Inaam Kachachi, *The American Granddaughter* (Iraqi)

Ibrahim Nasrallah, *Time of White Horses* (Jordanian-Palestinian)

Habib Selmi, *The Scents of Marie-Claire* (Tunisian)

2009 Winner

Abdo Khal, *Spewing Sparks as Big as Castles* (Saudi Arabian)

Shortlist

Mohammed Mansi Qandel, *A Cloudy Day on the West Side* (Egyptian)

Mansoura Ez Eldin, *Beyond Paradise* (Egyptian)

Rabee Jaber, *America* (Lebanese)

Rabai Al-Madhoun, *The Lady from Tel Aviv* (Palestinian)

Jamal Naji, *When the Wolves Grow Old* (Jordanian)

2008 Winner

Baha Taher, *Sunset Oasis* (Egyptian)

Shortlist

Jabbour Douaihy, *June Rain* (Lebanese)

Elias Farkouh, *The Land of Purgatory* (Jordanian)

Khaled Khalifa, *In Praise of Hatred* (Syrian)

May Menassa, *Walking in the Dust* (Lebanese)

Mekkaoui Said, *Swan Song* (Egyptian)

³⁰ <http://www.arabicfiction.org/en/about.html>

The International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award

Established in 1997, the award is managed by Dublin City Public Libraries but is unique in that it features an international library cooperative effort, with nominations made by libraries in capital and major cities throughout the world. Titles are nominated on the basis of 'high literary merit' as determined by the nominating library, so it offers a rare, if slight, glimpse of anglophone literary public preferences as reflected by libraries (currently absent from any formal database). The prize is €100,000 which is awarded to the author if the book is written in English. If the winning book is in English translation, the author receives €75,000 and the translator, €25,000. Although the prize has never gone to a translation from Arabic, it has featured three francophone Arab writers – Lebanese Amin Maalouf (short-listed in 2004), Moroccan Taher Ben Jalloun (2004's winner for *This Blinding Absence of Light*), and Algerian Yasmina Khadra (the pen name of Mohammed Moulessehoul) who was short-listed in 2008. Although this report does not cover francophone writers, it is worth noting here that Arab writers are at least being noticed by this prize.

Independent Foreign Fiction Prize (IFFP)

The prize has never been awarded to an Arabic book, but three have made it onto the long-lists of the last two years:

2010 Long-list:

Hassan Blasim, *The Madman of Freedom Square* (translated by Jonathan Wright) Comma Press

Elias Khoury, *Yalo* (translated by Humphrey Davies) MacLehose Press

Bahaa Taher, *Sunset Oasis* (translated by Humphrey Davies) Sceptre

2008 Long-list:

Alaa al Aswany, *The Yacoubian Building* (translated by Humphrey Davies)

The Translators' Association list of fifty outstanding translations from the last fifty years features two Arabic titles – Naguib Mahfouz's *Cairo Trilogy* (William M. Hutchins, Lorne M. Kenny, Olive E. Kenny, Angele Botros Samaan, 1991-3), and Alaa Al Aswany's *The Yacoubian Building* (Humphrey Davies, 2007). However, like two of the three IFFP long-list selections, these titles are among the very best known and best-selling Arabic titles ever, so have perhaps not been selected really for translation quality here but more for their fame.

The Saif Ghobash-Banipal Prize for Arabic Translation

Initially founded by the Banipal Literary Trust in 2004, the first annual prize was awarded in 2006. Since 2007 the prize has been sponsored by Omar Saif Ghobash and his family, in memory of his late father Saif Ghobash. The award is for the translation of 'a full-length imaginative and creative work of literary merit published in English', and has twin stated aims: in keeping with Banipal's major role as a global ambassador for Arabic literature, the award was founded in the hope of 'raising the profile of contemporary Arabic literature' to both 'encourage and promote the wider translation of contemporary

works of literature by Arab authors.’ The second aim is to honour ‘the important work of individual translators in bringing the work of established and emerging Arab writers to the attention of the wider world.’

The prize is administered by the Society of Authors in the United Kingdom and joins a number of translation prizes administered by the Society. It is still in its infancy, but it will be interesting to observe to what extent this unusual case of arts patronage by a single Arab donor can affect the quality and the public profile of Arabic literature in translation.

Past Winners:

2009 Winner: Samah Selim for *The Collar and the Bracelet* by Yahya Taher Abdulla (American University in Cairo Press)

Joint runners-up: Elliott Colla for his translation of *Gold Dust* by Ibrahim al-Koni (Arabia Books/Haus Publishing) and Michelle Hartman for her translation of *Wild Mulberries* by Iman Humaydan Younes (Interlink Books)

2008 Winner: Fady Joudah for *The Butterfly's Burden* by Mahmoud Darwish (Bloodaxe Books)

Runner up: Ghassan Nasr for *The Journals of Sarab Affan* by Jabra Ibran Jabra (Syracuse University Press)

Commended: Nancy Roberts for *The Man from Bashmour* by Salwa Bakr (American University in Cairo Press)

2007 Winner: Farouk Abdel Wahab for *The Lodging House* by Khairy Shalaby (American University in Cairo Press)

Runner up: Marilyn Booth for *Thieves in Retirement* by Hamdi Abu Golayyel (Syracuse University Press)

Commended: Peter Theroux for *Saraya, the Ogre's Daughter* by Emile Habiby (Ibis)

2006 (The Banipal Prize for Arabic Translation)

Winner: Humphrey Davies for *Gate of the Sun* by Elias Khoury (Harvill Secker)

Runner up: Hala Halim for *Clamor of the Lake* by Mohamed El-Bisatie (American University in Cairo Press)

The Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature / Translation Prize

Awarded annually to an Arabic book, this prize includes translation of the winner. However, as Neil Hewison explains below, a specific Mahfouz award for translation was bequeathed by Mahfouz, but it has never been possible to realize it in practice, due to limited funds. If it was developed on a similar model to the Saif Ghobash-Banipal prize, with private sponsorship, it could become not only a fitting tribute to Mahfouz's memory but another key investment in translation from Arabic.

Although most of the emphasis on funding within the Arab world is on the translation of books from English into Arabic, some translation prizes awarded in the Gulf are awarded to books translated in both

directions. These include the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Award for Translation.

5 Translation issues

5.1 Translators

We would like to be able to offer a comprehensive list of translators working from Arabic into English, but have been limited by available sources. Wikipedia has a huge branching list of translators by subject section (hence including translators of the Quran, *1,001 Nights* and pre-Islamic poetry), and by language: French, German, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Polish, Irish, Welsh, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Yiddish and Persian – but so far not Arabic. The only literary translators of Arabic works mentioned there are the deceased translators of pre-Islamic poetry, the Quran, and *1,001 Nights*.

The following list of translators is based on the bibliography we have compiled for this report, and on information given by our respondents. No information has been received from the editors of *Banipal* and therefore some of their translators may be missing from the list.

Translators from Arabic into English

Hosam Aboul-Ela
Kareem James Palmer-Abouzeid
Farouk Abdel Wahab
Asmaa Abdallah
Tagreid Abu Hassabo
Salawu Adewuni
Hassan Abdulrazzak
Baria Ahmar Sreih
Ammiel Alcalay
Suraya Allam
Roger Allen
Ahmed A Ali
Nesrin Alrefaai
Zuwaina Altuwayya
Sinaan Antoon
Tom Aplin
Martin Asser
Ahmed Y Ayyad
Amin al-Ayouti
Aida Bamia
Basil Hatim
Sophie Bennett
Marilyn Booth
Dina Bosio
Issa J Boullata
Pierre Cachia
Anthony Calderbank
Will Carter
Peter Clark
Catherine Cobham
Dalya Cohen-Mor
Elliott Colla

Charlene Constable
Tristan Cranfield
Peter Daniel
Humphrey Davies
Zakia Deeb
Eloise Dicker
Shirley Eber
Rasheed El-Enany
Nehal Elgendi
Ed Emery
Lubna Fahoum
Rowan al Faqih
Alexa Firat
Ferial Ghazoul
William Granara
Mona al-Ghobashy
Sally Gomaa
Alice Guthrie
Husain Haddawy
Russell Harris
Hala Halim
Paul Hammond
Ghenwa Hayek
Paula Haydar
Sharif Hetata
R.Neil Hewison
Kay Heikkinen
Kristen Hope
Glenna Berry-Horton
William M. Hutchins
Randa Jarrar
May Jayyusi
Ali Jimale Ahmed
Denys Johnson-Davies
Fady Joudah
Samira Kawar
Patrick Kosiewicz
Frances Liardet
Dinah Manisty
Mandy McClure
Leslie McLoughlin
Robin Moger
Ibrahim Muhawi
Clem Naylor
Amira Nowaira
Brian O'Rourke
John Peate
Jennifer Peterson
Christina Phillips
Hannah Poppy
Fadwa al Qasem
Noha Radwan
Jeremy Reed
Nancy N. Roberts
Chip Rossetti
Barbara Romaine
Tawfiq Sahli
Fathieh Saudi
Samah Selim
Anne Shaker

Tarek Shamma
Haroon Shirwani
Paul Starkey
May S. St. Germain
Raymond Stock
Chris Stone
Jonathan Smolin
Ahdaf Soueif
Jenny Steel
Adam Talib
Peter Theroux
Christopher Tingley
Shawkat M. Toorawa
Nader K Uthman
John Verlenden
Max Weiss
Malcolm Williams
Jonathan Wright
David J Wrisley
Nariman Youssef
Mona El-Zayyat

Deceased

Stanley Lane-Poole
Edward William Lane
Richard Francis Burton
Andrew Lang
Edward Powys Mathers
John Payne
Edward FitzGerald
Robert Ranke Graves
Peter Avery
John Heath-Stubbs

Translator Profiles

A range of translators were interviewed at length for this study. Space limitations do not allow the inclusion of each of the interviews, nor the full texts of the ones chosen for inclusion; so profiles of six translators follow, with a summary of the key issues they raised. Whilst it would be impossible to comprehensively represent the entire diverse community of Arabic-English translators, these respondents have been chosen for the breadth of their views and experiences, and the insight they offer.

5.1.1 Catherine Cobham

Catherine Cobham is a British academic (University of St Andrews) and literary translator based in the UK. Best known for her translations of Hanan Al-Shaykh's work, Cobham has translated a range of other Arabic literature for various publications, including literary magazines, academic journals, and publications such as *Index on Censorship*.

Having planned to read English at the University of Leeds in 1966, Cobham met some Arabs in the preceding months and decided it would be an interesting language to study, 'not knowing anything about the language or culture'. So she changed her degree to joint honours in English and Arabic, then went on to do a Masters on the works of the Egyptian short story writer, Yusuf Idris, completed in 1974. After having lived in Lebanon for a year and spending some briefer periods in Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, and

Palestine, she began translating ‘because I like writing in English, and every time I read Arabic fiction, I was subconsciously thinking how passages would sound in English.’ So, just like the rest of these master translators, Cobham began her informal apprenticeship, translating ‘all sorts of fiction, for hours on end’, learning by trial and error, and not minding that it never got published.

She recalls that at the time she started there was less Arabic fiction in English translation:

I thought reading it might be a good way for people to understand and relate to Arab culture. When I first did Arabic, I was frequently amazed at the ignorance of the Middle East shown by people – personal friends, the media – and their stereotyping of aspects of life and people there. I have had many people saying to me over the years (including two university professors!), when I tell them what I am teaching or translating, ‘Do Arabs write novels?’ To be fair, I don’t think this would happen any more, but the general educated public more than ever seems to view the Arab world in a monolithic way, via oil, Islam, Arab women etc.

In terms of her technique, Cobham feels that quite a lot has changed with experience. She started out translating ‘fairly freely, mainly wanting it to sound good in English’. This free translation was also, she feels, due her not knowing Arabic very well as yet, ‘although I didn’t really recognize that fully at the time.’ She then describes a phase of trying to be too faithful to the Arabic, ‘before I understood that this “faithfulness” actually sometimes produced a distorted or unfaithful rendition of the Arabic.’

As she has become more known and her reputation has grown, Cobham has also found some things have changed in her relationships with publishers – but crucially, not in terms of contractual rights or pay rates, as she discusses further in section 4.3 of this report. She has not found she is listened to more when she suggests a title, or that her opinion as a scout/agent carries more weight with publishers. ‘The main change is that a translator gets asked to do more as his/her name becomes known.’ So Cobham has been asked to read, summarize and assess books in Arabic which the publisher is thinking of having translated into English, but this can prove to be quite a delicate task, as she explains: ‘More often than not, these are not the kind of books that I would be suggesting to publishers, although some may well be relatively commercially successful, so I have to balance my criticisms of them with this in mind, which isn’t particularly rewarding.’

Like many of her contemporaries, Cobham is concerned that whilst Arabic literature in translation has increased quantitatively over the last twenty years, it has on the whole declined qualitatively, both in the quality of the works chosen for publication and in the quality of the translations. Of course these two facts are quite possibly linked, in that the quantitative increase has happened too fast for a critical mass of quality translators to be built up, along with the kind of benchmark standards that come with the slower development of a craft. Cobham observes astutely that more time is being devoted to certain aspects of the industry, but not necessarily the right ones. ‘Much more time is spent in promotion than used to be the case, but translators often work too fast or are insufficiently competent in one or both of

the languages in question, and in their literary understanding.’ Needless to say, she wholeheartedly believes that these problems can be tackled by the funding of constructive initiatives, targeting a range of aspects of the industry.

5.1.2 Jonathan Wright

Jonathan Wright is British and has lived in the Middle East for more than twenty of the past thirty years, including in Egypt, Sudan, Lebanon, Tunisia and the Arabian Gulf. He read Oriental Studies ‘on a whim’ at St John’s College, Oxford, from 1972-5. Working as a journalist for Reuters since 1980, he eventually became bureau chief in Cairo, responsible for covering Egypt and Sudan, before publishing his first literary translation in 2008.

Translating was something that seemed an obvious choice for Wright when he tired of news reporting, an idea that had always been ‘at the back of my head’. Like most of the literary translators working in the field, Wright had no formal training in translation (beyond some rudimentary activities at university). As a journalist he learned how to apply several important principles for good writing – ‘precision, concision and clarity’ – which he then adapted to translation work. He feels this training was more significant for his current work than his advanced Arabic, in fact: ‘A literary translator needs to master his own language, way beyond the requirements of ordinary life.’ Keeping up his English as an ex-pat was never an issue, he says, as ‘I was writing and conversing in English all the time.’ Like many of the others, Wright says he learnt to translate by translating. ‘The close analysis of semantic distinctions, which is central to translation, throws up all kinds of unexpected revelations about the usage of words, and because of the intensity of the process most of them sink in. Likewise one learns to recognize certain structural patterns and refers to a template for the easiest way to translate them.’

These works span a fairly broad range of writers and styles and topics, and whilst Wright says he ‘has not specialised’ within his translation work, ‘all my books have had political implications (perhaps all books do?).’ Although Wright is a relative newcomer to the scene, his work has been highly acclaimed and both of the books in print have been much more successful than either he or the two (tiny and grant-dependent) publishers expected. He is ‘delighted at the surge in interest, from people with no special connection to the Arab world.’

Discussing the way Arabic to English translation and publishing has developed during the last twenty years, Wright notes that foreign publishers seem to be much more open to Arabic fiction now, for a variety of motives – ‘some of them voyeuristic or prurient’, citing *Girls of Riyadh* here, and some of them ‘noble, and in the public interest’. He observes a new trend, also, marked by a stronger demand for contemporary work, especially if it addresses topical themes, ‘you know, women, religion, violence etc, but at the same time other less ‘agenda-driven’ works are also seeing the light of day.’

Wright has clearly chosen carefully the titles he would work on, promoting two of them himself. He enthuses about their serving the cause of cross-cultural enrichment, and helping, perhaps, to ‘normalize Arabs as human actors, in all their diversity, in the minds of other peoples.’

Many literary translators find themselves having to act as a publishers' scout and literary critic as an extension of their role as a translator, and some are more comfortable than others with this situation. In Wright's case, he 'would not at all feel uncomfortable playing that role. The translator may not be the best person to choose but he/she is certainly well-placed.' His choices, he affirms, have not been based on language training and experience, but on 'my life as an intelligent and relatively well-informed observer of the Arabic literary scene.'

Fascinatingly, Wright was the only translator I spoke to who didn't feel that an improved quality control method was needed in general in Arabic literary translation. He feels it would be 'rather like asking for quality control over novels', as he sees the work of translators as entirely transparent, 'and translators live on their reputations.' This is an unusual position among respondents, with many of them lamenting the scarcity of both formal and informal training opportunities and the lack of translation mentors.

5.1.3 William Hutchins

William Hutchins is a North American academic and translator of Arabic prose literature of the past hundred years. Whilst he doesn't label himself as a specialist in Iraqi literature, he has recently worked on texts by several Iraqi authors. His most successful work, which instantly earned him his reputation as a translator, has been his translation of the *Cairo Trilogy* by Naguib Mahfouz.

Hutchins first became interested in Arabic whilst teaching English in a private secondary school in Sidon, Lebanon, after graduating from Yale in 1964. He proceeded to study the language there with a private tutor, then at City College in London, at the University of Chicago and at the Center for Arabic Studies Abroad at the American University in Cairo. He first started 'trying to translate' when writing his dissertation at the University of Chicago in 1971, but says he only 'made a real start when I taught for three years at the University of Ghana.' He is clear that, far from being a career choice – 'it has in the main not helped my career as a university professor' – it was something he was keen to try. The ideas that drew him to it included notions of 'treasures in the attic; getting some respect at home for my students in Lebanon', and the possibility of having, aside from his academic career, 'a clandestine literary career'. As it turns out, he says, 'interacting with the authors of the works I translate is the best part of the job.'

Having had no formal training in translation, Hutchins affirms, like so many of the other most respected names in literary translation, that his training has been 'just doing it, on the job, year after year'. He finds it can be 'a bit depressing to see formal training in translation. It's about a passion for a novel; it's not about tricky technical verbal moves.' He has not found himself acting as a publishers' scout, as 'publishers don't seem to trust me.' He clearly feels a great kinship with the authors he works with, and would like to see better recognition for them. In many cases, far from acting as the publishers' scout, he is 'for better or worse the author's agent'. He has become 'something of a literary critic' through the frequent need to write an introduction for his translations. 'Also I like to translate multiple books by an author and thus develop an expertise in his works.'

The most important change he has experienced during his career has been the effect of computers and the internet. When, after Mahfouz's Nobel Prize win in 1987, Hutchins embarked on translating *The Cairo Trilogy*, he had to print out and post eighty pages at a time to New York and Cairo. Now, like everyone else, he sends manuscript files back and forth to authors for their corrections, as well as to editors. 'When I started out with Three Continents Press, the boss, Herdeck, did not like to send me page proofs, because it cost so much money. (Did it really?)' He also appreciates the incomparable ease of research compared to those early days. 'For example: the word *Feyli* as a Shi'i Kurdish community. The Arabic publisher did not know the word and changed it. [Or when] the author, Najem Wali, has sent me a file of his original manuscript with all the sexually explicit passages, which I have put back in after the Arab publisher carefully omitted them.'

Given the impact that new technology has had on his work, it is perhaps fitting that Hutchins's most specific and repeated suggestion for improving the quality, both of selections and of translations, is web-based. 'The translation websites for Words Without Borders and Brooklyn Rail have both proved helpful for me, but it would be nice to have a website that would post almost any translation by a translator who has been admitted to the group: a Wiki-translation site, with some safeguards built in. I need a publication or website where I can publish chapters of novels or short stories to get a wider circle of Arab authors introduced or launched in English. How about a digital publisher for translated novels; read the first chapter for free and then pay to download the entire novel?'

5.1.4 Nariman Youssef

Nariman Youssef stands out from the other translators profiled here in a number of ways: she is still early in her career, she works on poetry more than on prose, and she is an Arabic native speaker. Youssef grew up in Egypt, speaking mainly Arabic and reading/writing mainly English and German. She has been living in the UK since 2001, pursuing postgraduate studies in translation. She has been publishing literary translations since 2005, most notably *The American Granddaughter* by the IPAF short-listed Iraqi novelist Inaam Kachachi.

One of a small but growing group of literary translators of Arab origin who translate into English, despite Arabic being their mother tongue, Youssef's meticulous, subtle and creative work has met with critical acclaim. Youssef recalls her interest in Arabic literature growing after she moved to the UK, 'out of something like homesickness perhaps'. She began translating poetry, and emerged on the scene via the Poetry Translation Centre and other projects, rather than the more typical *Banipal* route. Youssef describes her interest in literary translation springing from an academic interest in what she calls 'the forms and processes of cultural expression'. She was clearly fascinated by the notion that so-called translation loss is in fact 'a reflection of the difficulty of finding the right words which lies at the heart of any speech or writing act. The gaps are crystallized in translation simply because we can't make the easy but inaccurate assumption that everyone involved is "speaking the same language."' As George Steiner so famously put it, 'all communication is an act of translation.'

Working on her PhD in translation studies alongside her actual translation work has made Youssef integrate the notions of theory and practice. Unlike the legions of literary translators who, as we have seen, dismiss translation theory as an unnecessary abstraction, Youssef feels it has a clear value, in several respects. ‘Of course, not every translator has to be interested in theory, but I believe that, especially for translators of literature, an awareness of theoretical concepts surrounding cultural exchange, the politics of translation, etc. is quite important.’

Not only does she see translation theory as important in terms of the translator’s own technique, but also in terms of how literary translation is perceived and assessed.

There has been some slow progress [in the critical and public reception of literary translation] I think largely thanks to the development of translation studies as a discipline. It’s more common now to come across literary critics who are aware of translation as a process (with internal politics and political implications), and to see that reflected in book reviews, though it’s still rare for translation to be referred to as a creative process.

In terms of her training in translation, Youssef stresses the importance of her own ‘eager consumption’ of books in both Arabic and English, and the broader importance of a translator’s knowledge of both source and target cultures. Like most of the translators interviewed here, Youssef also values her interaction with other translators as an integral part of her training – ‘whether more experienced established people in the field or my peers, and whether discussing a particular passage in a translation workshop or just reflecting about the difficulties and discoveries of our respective projects.’ As a participant in the January 2010 Cairo winter school pilot discussed at length elsewhere in this report, she saw the benefits of this type of workshop, and she stresses the importance of their being funded further. She has also clearly been blessed, during her recent work on *The American Granddaughter*, with a very engaged and supportive editorial team:

I had a relationship of trust with my editor (and her team) which eased the pressure of it being my first [full-length] novel translation. It was really helpful to know that someone was double-checking factual details and the nuances of dialect or sayings, etc. In the final stages of revision, I could call on my editor to help with decisions on critical or ambiguous passages in the text.

Like many observers of the contemporary Arabic translation scene, Youssef sees the selection of Arabic novels for translation as problematic. She is acutely aware of how much this selection is:

...tied up with the way world literature is consumed in the Anglo-American market, which is seeing fiction as a way for us to get to know other cultures. There’s a focus on new writings that deal with politically current or with taboo subjects, coupled with an ignorance of critically acclaimed works that are a couple of decades old, for instance. While this approach insists on the historical and sociopolitical context of fiction, it ignores

the literary context, or the things that make a text literary, namely its relationship to other texts and its position in its source literary field.

5.1.5 Nancy Roberts

Nancy Roberts is a North American who has been living in the Arab world for more than 30 years and is now settled in Jordan. She is a prolific and skilled literary translator, best known for her translations of Ghada Samman's works, all of which she translated 'just for the love of it', and later found publishers for. Roberts received an honorable mention from the Banipal Literary Award committee in 2009. She also translates in the areas of health care, law, current events, Christian-Muslim relations, Islamic law and Islamic thought and history. In fact she describes her specialization as Islamic thought, as she has translated quite a number of works in this area. This 'came about accidentally for the most part, as requests for this sort of thing began to come my way in around 2001, and it has continued since then.'

The story of Roberts's learning Arabic is perhaps the most clearly evident of a deep passion for the language of all the translators interviewed for this study. Having been inspired to learn through an acquaintance with a Muslim girl, Roberts began studying with a private tutor (not a native speaker) at Western Kentucky University, where no Arabic courses were offered. Showing outstanding dedication, Roberts set about learning Arabic in an environment of very limited exposure to the language.

The tutor, who had studied Arabic in earlier years, would put audio tapes in the library language lab, and that's how I worked on pronunciation. Then I did my MA in Applied Linguistics at Indiana University, which offered Arabic courses. For the most part I would just audit courses, since I didn't really need them for my degree. I would take the book and work through it on my own for the most part, and find native speakers to practice with on campus. I had such a personal enthusiasm for the language, I didn't find it terribly difficult to reach a level where I could begin to translate literature. However, it was a lot of work (work I enjoyed).

This tale is a refreshing antidote to the common talk of Arabic being an unusually hard language to learn, and the low academic standards which are accepted in many institutions as a result. As Denys Johnson Davies himself is fond of commenting in public appearances, 'some people manage to learn Arabic in a lifetime, some people need longer.' But Roberts seems not only to have been a natural but to have applied herself to the process with great and unflagging vigour. Having had no formal training in translation, she describes it as something she 'stumbled upon. I remember one day as I was reading an Arabic magazine for teenagers in my apartment in Kuwait (where I worked as an ESL teacher) that I had the thought that I'd like to become a translator some day. And the seed grew from there.'

Although Roberts describes her technique as having always been 'fairly intuitive', she notices that as a result of the confidence that comes with experience she now feels 'less bound' to the literal text than she used to, and she feels that this makes her more effective.

5.1.6 Tony Calderbank

Newly posted by the British Council to South Sudan, Tony Calderbank is British and has worked in the Middle East for much of the last twenty-five years, spending ten years (1990 - 2000) as a lecturer in the Department of English and Comparative Literature at the American University in Cairo, and ten years in Saudi Arabia with the British Council. He also worked at the University of Salford in the UK from 1987 to 1990, where he set up the Arabic Section in the Department of Modern Languages. He has been a published translator of Arabic literature since the early nineties.

Calderbank studied Arabic and Persian at Manchester from 1978 to 1982. Informally, he learned to speak Arabic after graduating when he worked in a small primary school in Cairo and lived with people there.

‘There were no other foreigners around so I picked up a lot, forced to account for myself in Arabic. I had a grammar of Egyptian Arabic by Mitchell which I used and worked out the rules combined with endless hours of practice every day.’ He feels that living in the Arab world helped him to understand what was going on behind the words, the drama and sadness, the humour, but says that even now he still needs to discuss aspects of the texts he works on with the writer or other native speakers. As such he is adamant that Arabic language teaching needs to include more immersion with native speakers and attention to spoken forms if students are to reach proficiency. He rejects the common academic misconception that Arabic dialects are not worthy of being taught and the exclusive assessment focus on formal written Arabic in some courses.

His critically acclaimed translation of *Zaat* by Sonallah Ibrahim was praised for reading ‘just like an English novel’, which Calderbank puts modestly down to being ‘lucky’, in that he knew exactly the social setting, ‘having lived in it myself, and what the characters looked like and how they thought.’ Unlike Wright, Calderbank says his English has been somewhat affected by his years as an ex-pat and his immersion in Arabic:

There are times when I struggle putting something into English simply because I can't completely get the Arabic out of my head. I am always looking for words that don't exist, I can almost glimpse them just beyond the horizon or in the twilight but can never grasp them. When I ask anyone or look in the thesaurus I only find words I already know.

Whilst he values very highly his formal education in translation theory at Salford, and the ‘wonderful’ atmosphere there – ‘we discussed translation endlessly’ – Calderbank is very clear that a combination of factors are needed to produce a good literary translator.

So much about translation depends on the translator acquiring a set of competencies: intimate knowledge of a foreign language and culture, the ability to write in the target language (a literary sense) and the confidence to take decisions (about which word/s to use). I also find that workshops and gatherings where translators can come together and share thoughts and carry out tasks together (as we did in Cairo) are very useful.

Also, echoing the near-universal response of the literary translator when asked how they learnt their craft, he stresses the real learning that comes with practice, through just doing it, 'and through talking to other translators and seeing their work – realizing that every translation is just a version and not a definitive act of conclusion.'

On the lively and constant debate about foreignizing or domesticating texts in translation, he reports having sometimes wanted to retain 'the Arab flavour of a piece' in various ways. This has included leaving some words in Arabic, (such as the particle *ya* before names), 'so as to let the reader come into the Arabic, make a bit of an effort, sense some strangeness.' This strategy is what Marilyn Booth calls "foreignizing" in its determination not to succumb to a homogenizing language that erases or diminishes the differences within the original text, and that forces the reader (rather than the text) to accommodate to "the other."³¹

As such, and especially from a post-colonial reading of the practice, it can be seen as quite a radical and important way of treating a text. Another acclaimed translator of Arabic, Issa J Boullata, also emphasizes the role of what he terms resistant translation, which 'does not abolish cultural difference; it rather uses it to bring something new to the target language while introducing a broader awareness of another culture and celebrating human diversity.'³² In the corporate publishing market-driven environment that is hungry for ever-smoother renditions of foreign texts that blend into the background among bland best-sellers of, for example, the 'chick-lit' genre, this can also be a controversial strategy. But Calderbank feels more confident in his ability to do it now, having translated a number of works. 'At the same time I also fully understand that the final responsibility lies with me.'

5.2 Key issues raised by the translators

On selection of titles

The negative impact of the commercial imperative on selection

Presumably for commercial reasons, publishers often choose works which they think will sell well for their extra-literary features. (Catherine Cobham)

More recently, there has been an alarming trend, particularly in women's writing, to publish works that cater to the preconceptions and biases of a Western readership. *Girls of Riyadh* is the most obvious case in point. (Roger Allen)

I'm pretty disappointed [about the way publishers approach Arabic literature], as often as not. One respected editor told me that he was looking for a comedy about ethnic tensions in Iraq ...

³¹ Booth 'Author vs Translator'

³² Boullata, Issa J. "The Case for Resistant Translation From Arabic to English." *Translation Review* 65, 2003. pp. 29-33

Too many of [the books that get translated] seem to be written for Western audiences. (William Hutchins)

Now that Arabic literature is reaching a larger audience it's being more and more 'orientalized' — terrorism and the condition of women's lives, catering to the interests of the general public who're not necessarily knowledgeable about the region in terms of daily life and social conditions and cannot understand the satire, humor, narrative experimentation, and so on that writers in the region employ. (Alexa Firat)

I would emphasize the bifurcation in publishing, that there is more than one situation. There are commercial presses, small literary ones, and academic ones. They do overlap, due to the pressure to commercialise, but they are different in terms of what they look for and what they are willing to do. So anything we say has to be carefully qualified. With that in mind, then, orientalist ethnographicism is this whole focus on tell-all memoirs, especially by women; it's an iconography of the veil and stripping it off, and it has had an impact on what publishers want and will go for — exposé, basically. It builds on the longstanding focus on asking for sociology instead of literature.

Of course there's nothing wrong with the demand for sociology in itself, but it shouldn't be the main reason and criterion for a book being published, and too often it is. Publishers say 'I'm really interested in stuff from Iraq right now,' with politics as the main impetus behind that interest. So for example one learns a lot from Huda Barakat about Lebanon and about the civil war, but you are also reading an amazing novel! So this concern with documentary mustn't be the main thing! It's a memoir-fixation. There is a lot of sensationalism involved, and this emphasis presumes a kind of transparency, an accuracy. I'm optimistic on the one hand because there are more books coming out and more interest, but I'm also worried by economics over the next few years — the coming closures of publishing houses and so on.

I worry about the choices that are being made now, in the wake of things like *Girls of Riyadh*: there's more focus on — I don't want to distinguish between 'literary' and 'popular' works, but let's say things that are 'more straightforward to Anglophone audiences.' As a translator you may avoid things you know are unlikely to get taken up by a publisher, so there's an element of self-censoring in that regard. Ironically I wanted to work for Penguin [on *Girls of Riyadh*] so as to make them take on more risky Arabic stuff. (Marilyn Booth)

It is more interesting to reflect what is being published in the Arab world than to insist on only translating 'the best'. (William Hutchins)

I think there needs to be better methods of facilitating discussion between what the Arab world thinks should be translated and what the English-speaking world does. The other factor is that people like Denys Johnson-Davies have dominated in the past through force of personality/idiosyncrasy — in Denys Johnson-Davies's case he has good taste on the

whole so this isn't a problem, but more broadly there doesn't seem to be a forum to debate what should be considered for translation. I'm not arguing for centralist control but I think something more systematic would be beneficial. On the other side there are the various writers' unions and organizations in the Arab world but they may have rather staid views on what is good quality literature. Of course the general issue as to what is good is fraught, but perhaps the British Council, a special working party or something like that, or the Translators Association? (John Peate)

I see a stronger demand for contemporary work, especially if it addresses topical themes (you know, women, religion, violence etc.) but at the same time other less 'agenda-driven' works are also seeing the light of day. We need as many scouts as possible, whoever they are. (Jonathan Wright)

I am less concerned about 'uneven material . . . appearing in publication' than about the role of political pressures of all types in the choice of what is or is not published and is or is not applauded when published and by the role of cliques who 'All know the man their neighbour knows'. (William Hutchins)

The lack of Arabic editorial culture and the resulting extra work for the translator:

The most difficult work I did was probably fiction where the original was not so satisfactory or competent, and I had to choose whether to 'improve' / edit it in English or leave it as it was. (Catherine Cobham)

I would also suggest that in some case there are issues with the way texts are produced in Arabic and in particular the way they are edited, or to be more precise not edited. This doesn't mean proof reading, but radical and robust restructuring of the text by a highly professional editor as happens in UK or USA.

I have found that most editors of the texts I have produced do a kind of proof read which improves the version in respect of language but does not add anything to the text in regard to plot, mood or characterization. I think the texts often need a much deeper reassessment by a proper editor (as above). In fact there may be a crisis in the Arab publishing world and that is the complete absence of the role of editor. (Anthony Calderbank)

Non-native Anglophones as translators:

There is also the vexed question of whether a mother-tongue Arabic speaker should translate fiction into English. I have quite often been told that only an Arab can understand Arabic well enough to translate out of the language, but I would maintain that an Arabic to English literary translator should preferably have English as his/her first language. (Catherine Cobham)

We must be careful, as knowing both languages is not enough to make you a translator.
(Marilyn Booth)

I translated a piece for the last Booker nomination and it was excruciatingly difficult and I kept wondering to myself why on earth I was doing it but then the novel won and I felt glad I'd done it. Interestingly enough the author has asked for a native speaker of Arabic to translate it. He believes that a text should be translated by a native speaker of that text's language, not by a native speaker of the target language. He doesn't think a foreigner will understand the Arabic text properly. (Anthony Calderbank)

Arab world funding issues:

I don't know about it in detail, but haven't so far been impressed by such projects as the so-called Arabic Booker (the winner of which is guaranteed translation into English, as are winners of a few other such prizes around the Arab world). I think what a rich Arab government could usefully do is to fund the translation of a corpus of Arab classics into English, both mediaeval and modern (20th century, during the great rise and maturation of Arabic fiction). The problem is that many Arab writers are so disaffected from their governments that they would reject this idea, and correspondingly quite a lot of the writers whose works are promoted by Arab governments are those who toe the party line in some sense. (Catherine Cobham)

So far, I have not experienced any efforts by Arab governments that really help the cause.
(William Hutchins)

Of course, they should do more. But the Saudis, Qataris and Kuwaitis have spent money on this. (Jonathan Wright)

I would say that the primary reason [for the lack of Arab funding sources] is that there is no organization either in any Arabic-speaking country or, above all, across the entire Arabic-speaking region, that is willing to take on the task of gathering in information about published works of literature. Bibliography in this context is essentially whatever any scholar working in the field happens to put together. As such it is very region-specific and reflects the scholars' (i.e. translators') knowledge and taste.

More support for translation initiatives is needed, particularly in publication; more co-operation with cultural organizations in the region itself. [Support from the Arab world is] minimal to non-existent. The concern is almost totally with translations INTO Arabic, not FROM. (Roger Allen)

There is the Arab Booker, there is Qatar Bloomsbury, Emirates Airlines International Festival of Literature, but still disappointingly little in the way of good solid funding.
(Anthony Calderbank)

I would favour foundations to finance the translation of pre-modern works, which are becoming neglected. Many of the existing translations are very out of date and need updating and/or improving. (Jonathan Wright)

Quality control:

European literature had a build-up of translation and translators over generations, but with Arabic there isn't a critical mass, as the increase in interest has been so sudden. And it is in the interests of the whole Arab world to get the standards up. (Marilyn Booth)

Some more systematic form of peer review would help. (John Peate)

It requires proofreaders who are themselves literate in Arabic, and who have read the novel in question in the original language. This can help to catch errors. (Nancy Roberts)

I have myself seen some very poor translation, sloppy, not well polished, and so on. It is a hard industry to regulate with all the volunteerism and amateur ad hoc-ism. I don't get paid when I do things for *Banipal*, so I suppose it's a labour of love in many ways. That makes it harder to oversee. (Anthony Calderbank)

I wish translated Arabic literature was reviewed more widely in the press, and again for its literary qualities and not just for its content, or the 'courage' of the author in portraying such topics, etc. Reviews of Arabic literature, when they occur, are almost always fairly superficial and generally favourable, and it would be much more useful if reviewers felt able to be more analytical and critical where appropriate.'

Some [editors] have helped, although this has usually been a case of them editing the Arabic original via the English translation in circumstances where I did not feel I had the licence to do so. Some editors seem to change things for the sake of it, or more seriously, change things based on a misunderstanding of the text, as they can't generally read Arabic. However, it is always useful having somebody new come to the translated text and responding to it. (Catherine Cobham)

The importance of mentoring:

Over the years I would get comments from people on things I had done with a text that would clue me in to ways I could improve my work, and this was part of my training too. (Nancy Roberts)

I think literary translators are / should be trained by apprenticeship. I did not do my apprenticeship in person but through the published translations of Denys Johnson-Davies. For the first time ever I have a young apprentice here. He has the ability; we will see whether he really wants the glorious career. (William Hutchins)

Mentoring is so important, and could have such a positive effect: the more we can do this the better, so as to create a more heterogenous and bigger body of translators. (Marilyn Booth)

Training opportunities:

I find that workshops and gatherings where translators can come together and share thoughts and carry out tasks together (as we did in Cairo) are very useful. (Anthony Calderbank)

There's a big difference between reading a newspaper, negotiating a business deal and reading pre-Islamic poetry. Arabic is such a vast body of material, with clear distinctions chronologically, geographically and in registers, that students and teachers have to set priorities. (Jonathan Wright)

The need for academic credit to be accorded to translations, given that so many of the best literary translators are academics:

Universities regard translation as a menial activity, unworthy of proper academics. (Paul Starkey)

Literary translation is sniffed at on academic CVs. Most crucially, UK university academics who are also translators are not given credit for their translations in the way they would be for academic research. As literary translation is in many ways more arduous than writing papers and requires a considerable amount of research to do properly, it should certainly be recognized on a par with academic research. I have often been advised that for the sake of my academic career, I should stop translating altogether and do standard research. I try to combine the two, and I also think that a vital qualification for a literary translator is that he/she should be a good literary critic. (Marilyn Booth)

Rather than these values being 'deeply enshrined on old academic convention and not easily shifted' as you ask, it's since the beginning of the Research Assessment Exercise, now known as the Research Excellence Framework, which I think started in the 1980s sometime and shifts its criteria quite a lot, but has got much more hyper in the last few years. Universities get very worked up about these exercises as they are an important factor in deciding how much money they receive over the following few years, and also of course there is prestige involved. Annotated translations with critical introductions have some standing in the RAE/REF, but footnotes etc are exactly what you don't want in a translation of fiction. (Catherine Cobham)

Published translations do not count as research for academics, and therefore they cannot claim them in research assessment exercises and by extension cannot earn income or grants for the institution from them. This is to the detriment of the academic world's input into literary and other forms of translation, but I can see a rationale for this exclusion. (John Peate)

I have always been perplexed, and remain so, at the attitudes of academe, at least in the United States, and especially 'literary' colleagues therein, towards the significance of translated works at those times when scholars are subjected to institutional assessment. An activity which demands the very highest levels of linguistic competence and intercultural awareness can, it appears, still be downplayed in the context of an assessment of more synthetic and theoretically based research which is, more often than not, of considerably less impact than translations within the public domain. (Roger Allen (in his introduction to the *Translation Review* special edition on translating Arabic, 2003))

Insufficient pay:

Bad pay keeps standards down, making people rush, cram, work when tired; it also means work gets farmed out to translators who are not really ready to take it on yet. I think literary translators should be paid more. A lot of the faults in translations as they are now may stem from people doing them too quickly because they aren't being paid much and can't afford to spend the necessary amount of time on them. (Catherine Cobham)

No one is willing to pay a translator a fair whack for their work. If I am to work six months solid on a four hundred page novel I need six months salary and while obviously different people have different expectations as to what that might be 2, 3 or 4 thousand pounds or dollars isn't going to cover it. The challenge is how to get the translator true recompense for their task.

If literary translators were paid more then they could dedicate more of their time to the activity. It is not professionalized enough at the moment with the vast majority of people doing it in their spare time or as one part of a portfolio of activities. (Anthony Calderbank)

Whether the new younger community of translators are here to stay:

Just anecdotally, I don't think so; not people who are really serious about it and do more than a book or two. (William Hutchins)

In my own experience more people just out of university are thinking it would be a nice way of life to translate fiction, but often they give up quite soon as it's harder than they think and/or doesn't pay well. (Catherine Cobham)

All I can say is that I see new names popping up, and the British Council seminar for literary translators in Cairo clearly showed that there is a new generation of translators. I think this an excellent development. (Anthony Calderbank)

More young and female translators are coming onto the scene, and also more bilingual people, people whose first language is not English. There were only a very few 'others',

before — they were all older male and upper to middle class. I was one of the first, along with people like Catherine Cobham. (Marilyn Booth)

5.3 Language and literary translation training opportunities

UK Universities offering Arabic courses (undergraduate or postgraduate):

Middlesex University

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Manchester Metropolitan University

University of Westminster

University of Cambridge

London Metropolitan University

University of Edinburgh

University of St Andrews

University of Oxford

University of Leeds

University of Salford

University of Manchester

University of Exeter

Durham University

University College Dublin is the only Irish University that offers any Arabic, but this is ‘Arabic for general purposes’ as an elective module in the Applied Languages Centre, not a full degree course.

The UK universities listed above all offer a range of Arabic courses, from undergraduate and postgraduate degrees that are almost entirely focused on language, to those that combine Arabic with several other things, or include it only for a specific element of the course. In addition, the relevant departments in these universities allow students from other disciplines to add elective Arabic modules to their courses.

UK universities offering relevant translation courses (undergraduate or postgraduate):

Aston University

University of Bath

University of Birmingham

University of Bristol

Durham University

University of East Anglia

Heriot Watt University (Edinburgh)

University of Edinburgh

University of Essex

University of Exeter

University of Hull

University of Leeds
City University (London)
Imperial College London
London Metropolitan University
Middlesex University (London)
University College London
University of Manchester
University of Newcastle
University of Portsmouth
University of Salford
University of Sheffield
University of Surrey
University of the West of England (Bristol)
University of Wales Swansea
University of Warwick
University of Westminster, London

Irish Universities offering relevant translation courses (undergraduate or postgraduate):

Queen's University Belfast
Dublin City University National University of Ireland, Galway
University of Dublin, Trinity College University of Dublin, Trinity College

Relevance of courses

The list of universities offering translation qualifications is of course much longer. Although there are several undergraduate degrees offered in translation, they tend not to be geared to literary translation, but rather to business, technical translation, or interpretation. It is at post-graduate level that students are more able to formally train in literary translation. The dedicated undergraduate can of course use a modular degree to build a substantial amount of translation work into their Arabic BA in the UK (especially by using independent study modules to work with a supervisor on literary translation). This is rare, however. As we have heard from our literary translators here, most people working in the field have not directly or formally been trained in the practicalities of literary translation at either level. Indeed there is lively debate about whether such a thing is even really possible – whilst some translation studies scholars like to think their theory work is feeding into the practice, many literary translators dismiss it as, at worst ‘an abstraction we must ignore’. (German Arabist and literary translator Hartmut Fähndrich).

Non-degree Arabic courses

In addition to the universities, there is quite an array of locations in both the UK and Ireland, even in the provinces, where Arabic can be studied part-time, as part of adult education or evening-class provision. Catering to a varied community of British Asian Muslims, Muslim converts, back-packers, ancient Egypt

fanatics, amateur linguists and so on, these classes are available even in eight locations in the Republic of Ireland, where no Arabic degrees at all are offered.

Lack of available data on student numbers

Unfortunately there is no publicly accessible database of student numbers in tertiary institutions, and none of the universities we contacted from the above lists provided figures. Anecdotally, however, the huge surge in Arabic admissions since 2001 is widely referred to by academics, staff and students in these long-established (and traditionally undersubscribed) departments. To take the University of Exeter as a case in point, then, the total Arabic language intake in October 2000 was twelve students, of which eight completed the first year. It should be stressed that this included combined honours students reading, for example, French and Arabic; students reading Islamic Studies with Arabic; a Middle East Politics MA student taking an elective Arabic module; and the few purists taking the Arabic BA. UK Arabic departments struggled to fill their courses so much in those days that they would admit students with no previous language studies beyond GCSE, which partly accounted for the high drop-out rates over the academic year. From 2002, however, the yearly intake began to more or less double, so that by 2006 that class of eight students who sat their summer exams in 2001 had been replaced by a year group divided into several classes due to numbers. The demographic of the intake changed a great deal over that period, also, with students of International Relations and Politics being increasingly drawn into Arabic language studies.

Arabic in schools

Alongside this expansion of tertiary institution Arabic teaching, there has been the expansion of Arabic at school level. Whilst still confined to the bigger multi-ethnic cities of the UK, Arabic is increasingly being offered at GCSE, A/S and A-Level (offered by CIE and EDEXCEL exam boards). According to Nadia Abdelaal of EDEXCEL, student numbers doubled between 2000 and 2001³³. This provision and this uptake is linked to Arabic being a community language in Britain and Ireland, but this in itself can lead to higher student intake at tertiary level. This is explored in great detail in the excellent report, *Community Languages in Higher Education: Towards Realising the Potential*³⁴.

A new demographic of Arabists?

It is worth bearing this explosion of student interest in mind, as we hear the evidence for a new wave of younger literary translators, less privileged in class and education, and representing a more diverse demographic in terms of race and gender. Given how long it tends to take a translator to get to the point of producing serious literary work, it could well be that we are only seeing the beginnings of that shift, and that a great many more are on their way. As Bill Swainson optimistically puts it, he has been 'struck by a host of young translators coming up and potentially establishing a standing army of good literary translators from Arabic.' Like many industry insiders, he is inspired by the possibility of this injection of new blood into what has so far been 'a handful of translators who learnt their Arabic in the war, or the post-war period, and have been responsible for the whole thing!'

³³ <http://www.ummah.com/forum/showthread.php?194963-GSCE-and-A-Level-Arabic>

³⁴ <http://www.routesintolanguages.ac.uk/community/>

This makes it even more crucial to get the quality control mechanisms that are so clearly lacking put into place, and to build up the much-needed training opportunities. However, it is worth noting that literary translation is still a minority activity, even among language graduates, not surprising given the reality of it paying less than the minimum wage in many cases. Centrally, then, if Arabic literature wants to attract the cream of this new crop of linguists, not only do training opportunities better tailored to the very specific needs of the literary translator need to blossom, but rights and pay need to be radically improved.

There seems to be a move away from treating Arabic literature as a solely academic specialization, which has opened up the field to translators and editors and publishers from outside the departments of Middle Eastern Studies. I see this as positive change, and one that needs funds to continue. (Nariman Youssef)

Practical suggestions for improvements in training

Several of the literary translators interviewed for this study had practical suggestions for ways the formal and informal teaching of Arabic and of translation could be improved, based not only on their own experiences but, in several cases, because they are themselves language teachers. William Hutchins, for example, feels that formal training in both Arabic language and in translation itself is a problem area. In terms of language, he recommends more field trips for students, and (like so many other respondents), more immersion, in whatever form this can be attained. So, even when students are far from being socially immersed in Arabic society, he feels that media use is crucial.

Other practical suggestions reflect the need to change the image of Arabic as an extremely difficult language to learn, and to teach it just like any other modern language. This would also raise expectations of the standards students could attain – there is concern that, by being lumbered with the label of a ‘difficult language’, Arabic is allowed to be taught to a lower level than other languages.

Catherine Cobham is adamant that modern and classical Arabic literature should form an integral (and compulsory) part of all Arabic language university courses:

Even if the student is not interested in literature *per se*, this helps him/her learn at a deeper level about the structures and usage of the language, and also about the culture. Unfortunately the emphasis is more on learning to use the language at a fairly basic level, and increasingly key texts are being read in (often poor) English translations. In my experience of teaching, some students are initially reluctant to read literature and think of their Arabic degree as being mainly vocational, but these students are almost invariably glad at the end of their degree course that they were obliged to study literary texts.

She is also concerned at the increasing trend for Arabic language teaching in universities to be ‘farmed out to underpaid native speakers, while “academics” lecture in English on their own specialities.’ She feels that the academic side and the language side should be more carefully integrated.

Of course there have to be some applied contemporary language classes at university, but students who really just want to be able to use the language on a day to day basis should go to a language school or an intensive course in an Arab country, whereas I feel that a lot of university Arabic courses give language teaching to native speakers of varying abilities and teach the ‘academic’ material using translated texts.

5.4 Training opportunities and mentoring

A great many sources in this study affirm that some of the most valuable training comes about very informally, often through mentoring. Learning from word-for-word comparison of the original and its translation may be considered as a form of mentoring, but it is the informal mentoring relationships formed between senior translators and their junior colleagues that offer the most valuable training opportunities. Formalizing and funding this essential process would be a huge investment, one that would bring rich rewards in terms of quality, especially if regular workshops and longer-term residency programmes could be established to complement other initiatives targeting young translators, such as the Harvill Secker Young Translators’ Prize inaugurated in 2010 (and awarded to a translation from the Arabic in 2011).

One of the most talked-about translator training events relevant to translation from and into Arabic was the pilot for a literary translation ‘winter school’ carried out in Cairo in January 2010 by the British Council in cooperation with the British Centre for Literary Translation and Arts Council England. The evaluation report on this important pilot project concludes that, ‘the translation workshop can play an important role in raising standards and giving more emphasis to training and nurturing talent.’³⁵ This conclusion was unanimously supported by the translators involved, both at the level of senior mentors and observers, and the more junior participants.

Tony Calderbank, who was one of the faculty for the event, felt that it clearly demonstrated the arrival of a new generation of translators. ‘I think younger people perhaps educated in Arabic in a less classical/orientalist kind of way are translating differently, in keeping with the times, perhaps, in terms of their style or the vocabulary they use.’ Given that this younger generation with a different educational background are available, Calderbank feels that it is logical that they should be the first choice for the translation of young Arab writers, for example those on the Beirut39 list. ‘I don’t mean that an older person cannot translate a young one and vice versa. Ideally a competent translator should take a text and faithfully reproduce it, regardless of factors such as age or gender, but I can see that this is not always the case,’ he says. Welcoming this development wholeheartedly, Calderbank feels it is important for senior

³⁵ Evaluation report by Kate Griffin for the British Council and the British Centre for Literary Translation, supplied by the author.

translators to be able to mentor the new generation and ensure that they acquire the skills needed to become accomplished translators, and that ‘as much as possible’ be done to ensure the continuing exchange of relevant ideas ‘across age ranges and nationalities’, as happened in the Cairo winter school. The British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia has been running acclaimed summer schools for years in a variety of language pairs, including, occasionally, Arabic to English. Paul Starkey, who has been a faculty member both there and, more recently, at the Cairo winter school:

I don’t think formal training is very relevant to literary translation (though it certainly is for other forms of translation); more workshops like the Cairo one earlier this year would definitely be a good thing, though. Workshops with authors, and colleagues working in other languages on the same book (I attended a couple of workshops like that in Toledo as part of the *Mémoires de la Méditerranée* project) are also very valuable.

Given the scarcity of these events for Arabic, it should not be surprising that there is great enthusiasm from the participants and the observers for more to happen in this vein. However, this obviously requires serious funding, and so one of the main aims of the Cairo workshop pilot in January 2010, according to the evaluation report, was ‘to secure a group of partners (UK and overseas) who will provide long-term funding and support for future workshops and establish a sustainable programme.’ Despite the ‘overwhelming enthusiasm’ of all the participant feedback, the report unfortunately concludes that this aim was only partially met. The report noted that, ‘The Bloomsbury contingent was also impressed by what they saw, and there were initial discussions about how this workshop might complement plans by Bloomsbury Qatar to support translation in the Arab world’, and that ‘many of the academics – speakers and participants – noted that this model could be adapted for use in university teaching.’³⁶

The British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT), based at the University of East Anglia, is active in literary translation training through its summer school for emerging literary translators. The school consists of several parallel week-long workshops led by practising literary translators, each one focussing on the work of one author (who is present to discuss and answer questions), and has so far covered languages ranging from French and Spanish to Polish, Basque and Japanese. In addition to teaming up with the British Council and Arts Council England to run the Cairo Winter School, the BCLT included Arabic for the first time in its 2011 Summer School, with the participants working on a text by the young Saudi author Mohammed Hassan Alwan with translator Paul Starkey.

The Mentoring Scheme for young translators, established by the BCLT together with the Translators’ Association in 2010, includes Arabic among the twelve languages catered for in 2012.

5.5 Translators’ conditions of work

Pay issues

³⁶ Ibid.

The 2008 report *Comparative Income of Literary Translators in Europe*, on the working and remuneration conditions of literary translators across Europe published by CEATL (European Council of Literary Translators' Associations) backs up the anecdotal evidence we have had, concerning the poor working conditions of translators, with facts. Many translators interviewed for our study also confirmed that low fees and badly negotiated contracts are forcing them to rush texts they are working on, and not allowing them the time they need to achieve the desired standard.

Publishers far too often want to reduce the literary translator to a paid servant, a secretary, and throw a small sum of money at him instead of offering rights to royalties. An editor told me that there is no such thing as a binding agreement between an author and a translator; the only thing that counts is a contract between a publisher and an author. That is such a bad attitude, especially when I spend years working with and for an author. (William Hutchins)

Despite the relative growth in the market for Arabic literature in English translation, most of us still do it for the love of words. (Nariman Youssef)

I don't think literary translation could ever pay enough to be described as a career. Literary translators need some other source of income in order to survive financially, which normally cuts down a lot on the time they have for translating. (Catherine Cobham)

I love it, and I would do it full time if I could, but I have to pay the bills. (Marilyn Booth)

The illuminating CEATL study makes the useful distinction between 'professional literary translators' and 'active literary translators':

The notion of 'professional literary translator' applies to all literary translators who work full time on literary translation and who earn their living mainly from literary translation and occasionally from translation-related literary activities (lectures and talks, readings, book publishing, literary criticism, etc.).

The notion of 'active literary translator' applies to all literary translators who publish at least one literary translation every two to three years, but who earn their living mainly from professional activities other than literary translation (technical translation, teaching or other).'³⁷

However, as we know anecdotally, and as the report confirms, in the United Kingdom and Ireland 'professional' literary translators are rare (less than 10% of all active translators, who are themselves a tiny proportion of professional linguists), if they exist at all. Certainly, in the preparation of this report no one was interviewed or referred to who would count in the first category.

³⁷ Holger Fock, Martin de Haan, Alena Lhotová, *Comparative income of literary translators in Europe* CEATL, Brussels 2007/2008

Similarly, the report refers to ‘occasional grants and subsidies of negligible amounts awarded by panels in Ireland and the United Kingdom’, but no examples of this between 1990 and 2010 for Arabic have been uncovered except for the BCLT bursary and the Cairo pilot winter school. In Ireland literary translators are completely exempt from tax. But it must be pointed out that earnings for literary translation are so low that most translators do not cross the yearly income tax threshold in the UK anyway! The CEATL report spells out just how bad things are:

The results of this initial survey, published in December 2008, confirm the worst suspicions: nowhere in Europe can literary translators make a living under the conditions imposed on them by the ‘market’; in many countries (including some of the wealthiest) their situation can only be described as catastrophic.

As Booth explains it, this is the reality of

[...] the position of the translator as a cultural worker who is so often kept behind the scenes. The translator is a pivot point in intercultural conversations, a broker of discourses. Translators usually possess considerable cultural capital, as educated bilingual (at least) citizens of the world and often employees of elite educational institutions. Yet the translator is also a wage laborer in the transnational circuitry of representations, one who most often does not own the rights to her or his own work.³⁸

The CEATL concludes with a well-framed and worrying question:

Nonetheless, this survey [CEATL] clearly shows that literary translators cannot survive in the conditions imposed on them by ‘the market’. This is a serious social problem on a continent that prides itself in being developed, multicultural and multilingual, but it is also, and above all, a major artistic and cultural problem. What are the implications for the quality of literary exchanges between our societies if literary translators have to dash off their work in haste in order to keep body and soul together?³⁹

Action and protests by translators

These stirring words inevitably prompt the question: are Arabic-to-English literary translators taking action? And if so, how? Marilyn Booth describes an incident where she and several other translators (including Humphrey Davies and Raymond Stock) joined forces to put pressure on AUCP to accept a standard contract with a fixed share of royalties, and translators’ names appearing on book covers. They were partially successful: their names do now appear on AUCP book covers, but the royalty dispute ended in a compromise rate which Booth still considers unsatisfactory. Neil Hewison, when asked about this dispute, recalled the royalties as having mainly a symbolic value, allowing the translators to feel ‘an emotional connection’ to the books. Certainly the financial sums in question are nominal only – but not insignificant enough to AUCP for them to grant the translators the full amount they were asking for.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Holger Fock, Martin de Haan, Alena Lhotová, Comparative income of literary translators in Europe CEATL, Brussels 2007/2008

Subsequently, Booth explains, she was planning to retranslate a Mahfouz novel for AUCP, but when she asked for royalties from Viking (who would have been the publisher outside Egypt) AUCP refused, and she backed out of the project on principle.

By far the most notorious dispute between a publisher and an Arabic translator of recent years, however, is Penguin's treatment of Booth over her translation of *Girls of Riyadh* by Rajaa Alsanea. While she acknowledges that this is an extreme example, Booth sees the case as emblematic of the wider status of the literary translator: 'The highly unprofessional manner in which Penguin Books and Alsanea treated me is an extreme but not unprecedented case of the tendency to minimize and devalue the importance of the translator's work, as a creative artist and as a cultural, linguistic and literary expert.'

Quality control suggestions

As discussed earlier, there is sometimes a need for Arabic editors or mentors to work with the author on the original text before it is translated, to make up for the editing by Arab publishers – at least until the uneven standards in the industry improve – so that the translator does not have to take that job on in addition to their own. Haus Arabia are developing this practice with Rafik Schami, informally, mentoring new writers.

There is also often a need for the translators themselves to have more editorial support, especially from bilingual editors or senior translators. Some translators have been called on to act as bilingual editors or critics, which is not always easy, as Paul Starkey explains:

I have also quite frequently been asked to assess other translators' work, when a publisher is not happy with what he has in front of him but can't relate it to the original as he doesn't know Arabic. I find this awkward too, although that hasn't stopped me saying on occasion that the work is unpublishable, and the fault is in the translation and not the original.

Despite the potentially sensitive nature of this role, the idea of an analytical periodical publication or another type of forum for peer review of translations from Arabic appeals to many. It is widely felt that this would be a good way of fostering a robust critical culture and would raise the standard of Arabic-to-English translation as a result, as well as compensating somewhat for the superficial nature of most media translation reviews. Unlike its closest equivalent, *In Other Words*, (put out by the British Centre for Literary Translation, for distribution to Translators' Association members), or ALTA's Translation Review, this proposed journal would be solely about Arabic translation. It would be highly specialized, and would be a way to create a forum for peer review of published translations from Arabic. Marilyn Booth is a keen promoter of this idea:

I think more public and collective initiatives like mentoring, residencies with rigorous mentoring, and a "kick-ass" journal that would make people take notice, would be important for both individuals and the profession. However, to do these things right will

require a lot of work. What I envision is a journal that would be academic but accessible (*Times Literary Supplement*-ish), focused on Arabic, would make a splash, would also make a case more generally for engaged and knowledgeable reviews of translations.

As Booth emphasizes, the idea of mentoring schemes is closely linked to the editorial support and critical review culture discussed above. Mentoring – whether in the form of long-term (and long-distance) support and feedback for junior translators by senior colleagues, or via intensive residencies and workshops – is perhaps the most frequently-mentioned suggestion by industry insiders. There is a great deal of enthusiasm for residencies and workshops, especially for longer residencies (a month or more) with senior translators working with junior ones, both collectively and individually. The BCLT launched a mentoring scheme for translators of twelve languages, including Arabic, into English, in 2011.

More subventions for publishers to pay the translator are clearly important, so that presses are not taking such huge risks, and to enable less commercial works of high literary quality to be taken on, allowing translators and editors adequate time to produce first-class translations.

Several of the respondents interviewed for this study felt that many (or all) of these proposals could form part of one comprehensive package to foster new translators and improve quality across the board. What becomes clear, on examination of the last twenty years of Arabic literature in English, is that Arabic is in an unusual position in terms of the speed of the increase in exposure it has experienced. Unlike the tradition of translation from European languages, in which a culture of standards has been built up over generations, there has not been time for Arabic to reach that point. There is a feeling that measures need to be taken to ensure a gradual setting and raising of standards, and that these recommendations could be a significant step towards that goal.

Membership of the UK Translators Association

At present there are no literary translators of Arabic in the TA online database. Unlike translators' associations in other countries, the TA does not keep records of which languages its members translate from, unless they fill their details in on an online database. Only one of the interviewed translators is a member. When asked why they were not members, especially given some of the rights issues that were raised, many of the translators had not really considered it – in fact in at least one case the question served as a prompt to make someone join up! Those that are based outside of the UK felt it did not apply to them, and some of the academics thought they were already paying enough in membership fees to their subject societies and various other bodies. Ironically, the wages for literary translation are so low that the translators feel they cannot afford to join the organization that might help them to receive a fairer reward for their labours. In contrast to this state of affairs in the UK, the American Literary Translators Association (ALTA) was frequently mentioned and praised for its work in general: as a good source of information about possible venues for publication, for its journal *Translation Review*, and for its conferences.

ALTA's current membership is 637, of whom 21 are translators of Arabic to English and vice versa. In addition to *Translation Review*, ALTA promotes literary translation through the publication of *Annotated Books Received*, the *ALTA Guides to Literary Translation*, the *ALTA Newsletter*, and through an annual conference. In addition to this, ALTA presents the annual National Translation Award, a \$5,000 prize for the best book-length translation into English of a work of fiction, poetry, or creative non-fiction.

ALTA also awards Travel Fellowships to beginning translators for travel to the ALTA Annual Conference.⁴⁰ Whilst a feeling was expressed by several respondents that the opportunities offered by membership of an organization would be valuable, it seems that the UK Translators Association needs to do more to attract members from this community.

6 Conclusions and recommendations

This report examines the situation of Arabic literature in translation in the UK and Ireland from 1990 to 2010, touching on patterns of translation, publication, dissemination and reception, identifying areas where further research is needed, highlighting key matters of concern or enquiry, and making recommendations for further action. In many ways, the report confirmed issues and concerns which had been previously aired in various forums by professionals involved in the field of translating and publishing Arabic literature in English, but had never been collected and analyzed before in a survey of this kind.

6.1 Summary of key issues, problems, obstacles

The following issues have been identified as requiring urgent action:

6.1.1 Publishing

- a) The negative impact of the commercial imperative in selection and promotion / marketing of published titles
- b) Disproportionate influence of certain parties on selection of authors and titles
- c) Narrow range of sources of information on new titles
- d) Lack of involvement of Arab experts in the process
- e) Lack of translation quality control mechanisms and lack of copy-editors with knowledge of Arabic
- f) Low rates of pay and poor contractual conditions, no royalties offered

6.1.2 Translators

- a) Changing demographics in the translator community, and how new intake can be supported
- b) Non-native Anglophones as translators

⁴⁰ <http://www.utdallas.edu/alta/about/alta>

- c) Insufficiency of training opportunities – importance of informal short term opportunities and especially the value of mentoring
- d) Academic credit needs to be accorded to translations

6.1.3 Funding for translation and promotion of books

- a) Lack of funding in general, funding needs to be increased and cover all stages in the chain from selection to marketing
- b) Arab world funding issues: the lack of funding in general, and the question of ethical sources of funding, censorship

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 A centralised online resource

At present it is difficult to easily access information about translation matters in general and about translated books and related events in particular. Attempts have been made to establish such an online resource in the past, for example the British Council translation website, with mixed results. Yet, a high-quality, current and comprehensive online resource with relevant links would greatly benefit the overall profile of translated literature and the related sector.

6.2.2 Bibliography and translation statistics

In the absence of a reliable, exhaustive, and easily-accessible bibliography of works in translation by language and country, it is not possible to get a full picture of the history of translation in the British Isles, nor discern trends in translation publishing. There is an urgent need to create a mechanism to collect data on the publishing of translations. In addition, the authors recommend the creation of a database of translated theatre plays, which are not always published in book form.

6.2.3 Translators, training and conditions of work

There is a need to develop a coordinated raft of measures affecting translators:

- developing and improving training opportunities, especially in terms of short term training, residencies and mentoring;
- improving translators' contractual conditions and remuneration – a role for the Translators' Association;
- creating support measures complementary to payment offered by publishers (following models and best practices in other countries)
- developing or improving mechanisms for translation quality control and feedback on the standard of published translations, and measures to improve editing practices of both source and target texts by means of internships, training and seminars, and the production of manual-type publications, such as *Translation in Practice: A Symposium* by Dalkey Archive Press.

An up-to-date, fully-detailed contact database of currently active translators (identified by country of origin, so as to assess UK/US questions of translation) needs to be established, not only for the languages in question. In the absence of any significant membership in professional associations such as the Translators' Association, and in the absence of publicly accessible data, such information is hard to come by, except through publisher-by-publisher appeal.

6.2.4 Publishing and the book trade

It is essential to get a better picture of the trade end of publishing in order to ascertain attitudes – and barriers – to the uptake of work in translation by bookshops, libraries and the public in order to devise marketing and reader development strategies for translated literature. In addition to publishers, there is a need to approach and interview sales reps, bookshop buyers, distributors and publicists to get a picture of the attitudes and barriers that exist in that last intervening section of the publishing endeavour between book production and reader. Online retailers such as Amazon or the Book Depository also need to be assessed both in terms of patterns of buying and patterns of related publicity.

6.2.5 Outreach to independent presses

As larger publishers and conglomerates are fairly narrow in their commitments to work in translation, outreach to smaller independent presses is needed in order to achieve the desired diversity identified above – an outcome that is likely to be best served by promoting foreign titles and literatures in translation to smaller publishers alongside larger ones. These might be publishers with translation lists, or publishers with specialized interests, whether in a region or particular genres or forms.

6.2.6 E-publishing

The potential of e-publishing for the dissemination of translated literature needs to be assessed, whether in relation to books, internet publishing or the growing influence of literary websites and blogs.

6.2.7 Translation and the media

Reviews editors in the UK and Ireland are notoriously poor at ensuring adequate space for translation reviews, proper recognition and assessment of translation quality, and even translators' names. It has not been possible within the time-frame of this report to examine media coverage of translated work in depth, including mainstream press, radio, television and online material or to acquire more information in this respect from publishers' publicists and marketing departments. A more thorough assessment of coverage by print, digital and audio-visual media is required to further support this claim, and formulate recommendations for measures aiming to change this culture across the board, under the aegis of the Translators' Association and the Society of Authors, British Centre for Literary Translation, English PEN and other relevant organisations. Support for workshops and seminars on reviewing, the role of translators as reviewers, and general measures to improve reviewing by mainstream media are called for, as well as a specialized review publication dedicated to a more detailed analysis which would improve translation quality as a result of qualified peer review.

6.2.8 Access to work in translation

Libraries are a key component in the delivery and accessibility of work in translation. Although it is known that library budgets have been massively reduced, again it has not been possible within the framework of

this report to assess the impact of those kinds of cuts on work in translation. Both borrowing statistics and acquisition policy and trends would reveal useful information and patterns of interest on the part of the public, as well as make it possible to draw closer connections between the impact of, for example, reviews and festival or media appearances, and spikes in interest by the reading public. In addition, library borrowing statistics might yield powerful arguments about the interest in translation in support of grant applications that would not be evident in, for example, sales.

6.2.9 Ensuring diversity in publishing, and in the programming of festivals, venues and projects

More resources need to be made available to organisations, venues and smaller presses publishing and promoting work in translation, to ensure that diversity across culture, gender, subject matter, language and genre is achieved, and that small, independent presses can effectively compete in a crowded market largely hostile to translation. With respect to Arabic, there is a need to establish more balanced and comprehensive sources of information on new and suitable titles, and to create and make use of contacts between British and Arab publishers and the Arab literary world in general, involving Arab literary professionals in the selection and assessment of material to be translated.

6.2.10 Support for literary exchange and mobility

Resources need to be made available to achieve a more lively and equitable literary exchange, provide adequate mobility funding for authors, translators and other professionals, and create more residency opportunities in the UK and Ireland following international examples of best practice.

6.2.11 Advocacy and funding for translation

Translation into English is a priority, as it provides for onward translation into other languages. New and innovative approaches need to be developed to argue the case for financial support for literary translation – emphasizing its role in the reduction of conflict, cross-cultural dialogue and international relations, for example, in addition to making a case for diversity and access to international culture. This must be done with a view to accessing sources of funds that have not traditionally been available for the arts, literature, publishing or translation – such as charitable foundations, private individuals and innovative sponsorships.

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<http://www.bclt.org.uk/>

<http://www.atanet.org/>

<http://www.societyofauthors.org/translators-association>

<http://www.arabicfiction.org/en/about.html>

Interviewed respondents

Roger Allen - Translator and academic (USA)
Hanan al-Shaykh - Author (Lebanon / UK)
Ashley Biles - Publisher, Saqi London (UK)
Marilyn Booth - Translator and academic (USA)
Tony Calderbank - Translator, director of British Council South Sudan (UK)
Peter Clark - Translator (UK)
Catherine Cobham - Translator and academic (UK)
Rasheed El-Enany - Academic and translator (Egypt / UK)
Omar El-Khairi - Playwright and theatre director (UK)
Fadia Faqir - Author (UK)
Hartmut Fahndrich - Translator (Germany)
Alexa Firat - Academic and translator (USA)
Kate Griffin - Arts consultant (UK)
Harry Hall - Publisher (UK)
Sousan Hammad - Journalist and writer (Palestine / USA)
Iman Hamam - Academic (UK / Egypt)
Neil Hewison - Publisher, American University of Cairo Press (UK / Egypt)
William Hutchins - Translator and academic (USA)
Jehan Marei - Publisher, Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing (UAE)

Samia Mehrez - Academic (Egypt)
Caroline McCormick - Arts consultant (UK)
Dan Nunn - Publisher (UK)
Mohammed-Salih Omri - Academic and translator (Tunisia / USA / UK)
Ra Page - Publisher (UK)
John Peate - Academic and translator (UK)
Nancy Roberts - Translator (USA / Jordan)
Haroon Shirwani - Translator (UK)
Paul Starkey - Translator and academic (UK)
Andy Smart - Publisher and translator (UK / UAE)
Bill Swainson - Publisher (UK)
Jonathon Wright - Translator (USA / Egypt)
Nariman Youssef - Translator and academic (Egypt / UK)

8 Appendix: Bibliography of works translated from Arabic into English in the UK and Ireland, 1990 - 2010

The authors would especially like to thank Paul Auchterlonie, former Librarian for Middle East and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, (1981 to 2011) and now honorary research fellow, for his invaluable advice during the compilation of this bibliography.

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Poetry	Al-Bayati, Abdul Wahab	Love, Death, and Exile		Bassam K. Frangieh	Georgetown University Press	Washington, D.C	1990	2004: Georgetown University Press
Fiction	Al-Hakim, Tawfik	Return of the Spirit	'Awdat al-rūḥ	William M. Hutchins	Three Continents Press	Washington, D.C.	1990	
Fiction	Al-Sharqawi, Abdel Rahman	Egyptian Earth	al-Arḍ	Desmond Stewart	Saqi	London	1990	2005: Ulverscroft, hardcover 2005: Saqi, paperback
Fiction	Gamal al-Ghitani	Zayni Barakat	Zaynī Barakāt	Farouk Abdel Wahab	Penguin	London	1990	1988: Viking/King Penguin 2004, 2010: American University in Cairo Press
Short fiction	Idris, Yusuf	Rings of Burnished Brass		Catherine Cobham	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1990	
Fiction	Kalīlah wa Dimnah	Burzōy's voyage to India and the origin of the book of Kalīlah wa Dimnah		François de Blois	Royal Asiatic Society,	London	1990	
Fiction	Kāmil, Salīm Maṭar	Lady of the Bottle	Imra'at al-qāṛūrah		Riad El-Rayyes	London	1990	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Ibn Taymīyah, Aḥmad ibn ʿ Abd al-Ḥalīm	Al-'Ubudiyyah: being a true slave of Allah	Al-'Ubudiyyah	Nasiruddin al-Khattab.	Ta-Ha	London	1990	
Poetry	Collective	The Seven Arab odes: an English verse rendering with brief lives of the seven poets		Desmond O'Grady.	Agenda	London	1990	
Short fiction	Kanafani, Ghassan	All That's Left to You: A Novella and Other Stories		May Jayyusi, Jeremy Reed	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1990	2004: Interlink Books
Short fiction	Abdullah, Yahya Taher	The Mountain of Green Tea and Other Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1991	1984: Heinemann 1999: American University in Cairo Press
Short fiction	Al Murr, Muhammad	Dubai Tales		Peter Clark	Forest, paperback	London	1991	
Fiction	Al-Shaykh, Hanan	The Story of Zahra	Ḥikāyat Zahrah		Quartet	London	1991	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Short fiction	Collective	My Grandmother's Cactus: Stories by Egyptian Women		Marilyn Booth	Quartet	London	1991	1993: University of Texas Press 1998: Quartet
Short fiction	Gorgy, Nabil Naoum	The Slave's Dream and Other Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	Quartet	London	1991	1998
Fiction	Ibrahim, Gamil Atia	Down to the Sea	al-Nuzūl ilā al-baḥr	Frances Liardet	Quartet	London	1991	
Short fiction	Idris, Yusuf	Selected Stories		Dalya Cohen-Mor	Ithaca	Exeter	1991	
Short fiction	Kanafani, Ghassan	Men in the Sun and Other Palestinian Stories		Hilary Kilpatrick	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1991	1998: Lynne Rienner, paperback
Poetry	Khalil Hawi, Nadeem Naimy	From the Vineyards of Lebanon		Fuad Said Haddad	American University of Beirut	Beirut	1991	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Palace of Desire	Qaṣr al-shawq	Humphrey Davies	Doubleday	New York	1991	1991: American University in Cairo Press 1992: Anchor 2006: Black Swan

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Short fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Time and the Place and Other Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1991	
Fiction	Munif, Abd al-Rahman	The Trench	Ukhdūd	Peter Theroux	Pantheon Books	New York	1991	
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	Searching	Ghā'ib	Shirley Eber	Zed	London	1991	1991, 2009
Short fiction	Bakr, Salwa	Wives of Men and Other Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	Quartet, hardcover	London	1992	1993: University of Texas Press, paperback 1997: American University in Cairo Press
Short fiction	Jacqueline Kaye, ed.	Maghreb: New Writing from North Africa			University of York	York	1992	
Fiction	Maḥfūz, Najīb	The journey of Ibn Fattouma	Rihlat ibn Fattuma.	Denys Johnson-Davies.	Doubleday	London	1992	
Short fiction	Idris, Yusuf	The Piper Dies and Other Stories		Dalya Cohen-Mor.	Sheba Press	Potomac, MD	1992	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib, Ed. By Maged el Kommos, John Rodenbeck	Miramar	Mīrāmār	Fatma Moussa Mahmoud	Anchor		1992	1978: American University in Cairo Press 2005: American University in Cairo Press
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Sugar Street	Sukkaṛīyah	William Maynard Hutchins, Angele Botros Samaan	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1992	1997, 1993: Anchor
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Midaq Alley	Zuqāq al- Midaqq	Trevor Le Gassick	Anchor	New York	1992	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Journey of Ibn Fattouma	Riḥlat Ibn Faṭṭūmah	Denys Johnson- Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1992	1993: Doubleday 1993: Anchor
Short fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	Death of an Ex- minister	Mawt ma'ālī al-wazīr sābiqan	Shirley Eber	Minerva	London	1992	
Poetry	Collective	Early Arabic Poetry, Vol.1, Marāthī and Ṣu' lūk poems.		Alan Jones	Published by Ithaca for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University,	Reading	1992	

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Fiction	al-Kharrat, Edwar	Girls of Alexandria	Yā banāt Iskandarīyah	Frances Liardet	Quartet	London	1993	1998
Fiction	Ṣālih, al-Ṭayyib	Season of migration to the north		Denys Johnson-Davies.	Penguin	London	1993	
Fiction	Al-Shaykh, Hanan	Women of Sand and Myrrh	Misk al-ghazāl	Catherine Cobham	Quartet	London	1993	2010 Bloomsbury
Short fiction	Badr, Liana	A Balcony over the Fakihani	Shurfah 'alā al-Fākihānī	Peter Clark with Christopher Tingley	Interlink Books	Brooklyn, N.Y.	1993	
Short fiction	Mike Gerrard and Thomas McCarthy, eds. various authors	Passport to Arabia			Serpent's tail	London	1993	
Fiction	Fayyad, Soleiman	Voices	Aṣwāt	Hosam Aboul-Ela	Marion Boyars Publishers, hardcover	New York	1993	
Fiction	Husayn, Taha	The Sufferers: Stories and Polemics	Dar al-Ma'arif Edition	Mona El-Zayyat	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1993	

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Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Adrift on the Nile	Thartharah fawqa al-Nīl	Frances Liardet	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1993	
Poetry	Fakhr al-Dīn Qabawāh.	Translation and critical study of ten pre-Islamic odes: traces in the sand		Nouryeh, Christopher	Edwin Mellen Press	Lewiston ; Lampeter	1993	
Fiction	Nasrallah, Ibrahim	Prairies of Fever	Barārī al-ḥummá	May Jayyusi, Jeremy Reed	Interlink	May Jayyusi and Jeremy Reed	1993	
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	The Well of Life; The Thread: Two Short Novels		Sherif Hetata	Lime Tree	London	1993	
Children's book		The Wicked Witch and Her Children		David Rose	Garnet	London	1994	
Poetry	Algozaibi, Ghazi A.	From the Orient and the Desert			Kegan Paul	London	1994	

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Fiction	Badr, Liana	The Eye of the Mirror	‘Ayn al-mir’āh	Samira Kawar	Garnet	Reading	1994	1994, 2008
Fiction	Barakat, Hoda	The Stone of Laughter	Hajar al-ḍaḥk	Sophie Bennett	Garnet	Reading	1994	1995, 1998: Interlink 2001: Roundhouse
Short fiction	Bisatie, Mohamed	A Last Glass of Tea and Other Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press, paperback	Cairo	1994	1995: Three Continents Press 1998: Lynne Rienner, hardcover
Short fiction	Collective	Modern Arabic Short Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1994	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Psalms		Ben Bennani		Boulder, Colo.	1994	Lynne Rienner
Poetry	Hafiz, Hisham Ali	The Desert is My Oasis				London	1994	Kegan Paul
Fiction	Khoury, Elias	The Journey of Little Gandhi	Riḥlat Ghāndī al-ṣaghīr	Paula Haydar	University of Minnesota Press, hardcover	Minneapolis	1994	2009: Picador, paperback
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Harafish	Maḥamat al-ḥarāfīsh	Catherine Cobham	Doubleday	London	1994	1997: Anchor
Fiction	Munif, Abd al-Rahman	Cities of Salt	Mudun al-milh	Peter Theroux	Vintage	London	1994	

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Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	The Innocence of the Devil	Jannāt wa-lblīs	Sherif Hetata	Methuen	London	1994	
Memoir	Saadawi, Nawal	Memoirs from the Women's Prison	Mudhakkirātī fī sijn al-nisā'	Marilyn Booth	University of California Press		1994	
		The Arabian Nights II: Sindbad and Other Popular Stories		Husain Haddawy	Norton	New York	1995	1998: Everyman's Library
Fiction	Al-Shaykh, Hanan	Beirut Blues	Barīd Bayrūt	Catherine Cobham	Chatto & Windus	London	1995	1996: Vintage
Play	Bakathir, A. A.	The Ring , The Orchard Keeper, The Noisy Neighbour		Yasien Mohamed	Ta-Ha	London	1995	
Fiction	Bakr, Salwa	The Golden Chariot	al-'Arabah al dhahabīyah lā tas'ad ilā al-samā'	Dinah Manisty	Garnet	Reading	1995	2008 American University in Cairo Press, paperback

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Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Memory for Forgetfulness	Dhākirah lil-nisyān	Ibrahim Muhawi	University of California Press	Berkeley	1995	
Fiction	Faqih, Ahmed	Gardens of the Night		Russell Harris, Amin' al-Ayouti and Suraya 'Allam	Quartet	London	1995	
Fiction	Idlibi, Ulfat	Sabriya: Damascus Bitter Sweet	Dimashq ya basmat al-ḥuzn	Peter Clark	Quartet	London	1995	1997: Interlink Publishing
Fiction	Idris, Yusuf	The Sinners	al-Harām	Kristin Peterson-Ishaq	Lynne Rienner	Boulder, Colo.	1995	1984: Three Continents Press
Poetry	Qusaybī, Ghāzī ' Abd al-Raḥmān	Dusting the colour from roses: a bilingual collection of Arabic poetry.		A.A. Ruffai ; revised by Heather Lawton.	Echoes	London	1995	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Arabian Nights and Days	Layālī alf laylah	Denys Johnson-Davies	Doubleday	London	1995	
Fiction	Na'na, Hamida	The Homeland	Waṭan fī al-'aynayn	Martun Asser	Garnet	Reading	1995	

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Fiction	Abdel Meguid, Ibrahim	No One Sleeps in Alexandria	Lā aḥad yanām fi-l-Iskandarīyah	Farouk Abdel Wahab	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	1996	2006: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Poetry	Al-Awaji, Ibrahim	The Tents of the Tribe		Maryam Ishaq Al-Khalifa Sharief	Echoes	London	1996	
Poetry	Collective	Early Arabic Poetry, Vol.2, Select odes.		Alan Jones	Published by Ithaca for the Board of the Faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University,	Reading	1996	
Fiction	Algozaibi, Ghazi	An Apartment Called Freedom	Shaqqat al-ḥurrīyah	Leslie McLoughlin	Kegan Paul	London	1996	
Fiction	Berrada, Mohamed	The Game of Forgetting	Lu'bat al-nisyān	Issa J. Boullata	The University of Texas	Austin, TX	1996	1997: Quartet
Short fiction	Nur and Abdelwahab Elmessiri, ed.	A Land of Stone and Thyme: An Anthology of Palestinian Short Stories			Quartet	London	1996	

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Poetry	Hafiz, Hisham Ali	Words With Rhythm : Second Beat	Kalimāt lahā īqā'	Farouk Luqman	Kegan Paul	London	1996	
Memoir	Choukri, Mohamed	Streetwise		Ed Emery	Saqi	London	1996	2000: Saqi, hardcover 2007: Telegram, paperback
Poetry	Kabbani, Nizar	On Entering the Sea : The Erotic and Other Poetry of Nizar Qabbani		Lena Jayyusi, Sharif S. Elmusa	Interlink Books	New York	1996	
Fiction	Khoury, Elias	The Kingdom of Strangers	Mamlakat al- ghurabā'	Paula Haydar	University of Arkansas Press	Fayetteville	1996	
Memoir	Munif, Abd al- Rahman	Story of a City : a Childhood in Amman		Samira Kawr	Quartet	London	1996	
Short fiction	Salih, Tayeb	Bandarshah	Bandar Shaḥ	Denys Johnson- Davies	Kegan Paul	London	1996	
Fiction	Salih, Tayeb	Season of Migration to the North	Mawsim al- hijrah ilá al- shimāl	Denys Johnson- Davies	L. Rienner, paperback	Boulder	1996	1969: Heinemann, hardback 2003: Penguin 2008: Heinemann

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Fiction	Taher, Bahaa	Aunt Safiyya and the Monastery	Khaḷatī Ṣafīyah wa-al-dayr	Barbara Romaine	University of California Press	Berkeley	1996	
Fiction	Abdel Meguid, Ibrahim	The Other Place	Baldah al-ukhrā	Farouk Abdel Wahab	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1997	
Fiction	al-Zayyat, Latifa	The Owner of the House	Ṣāhib al-bayt	Sophie Bennett	Quartet	London	1997	
Memoir	Husayn, Taha	The Days	Ayyām	E.H. Paxton, Hilary Wayment, Kenneth Cragg	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	1997	2001: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Poetry	Ba.hr al-‘ Ulūm, Muḥammad Taqī	The Tale of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain “The Kerbala Epic		Najim al-Khafaji	AB Cultural Institute for Arabic & Islamic Research,	London	1997	
Short fiction	Idris, Yusuf	The Cheapest Nights, And Other Stories	Arkhaṣ layālī	Wadida Wassef	Lynne Rienner	Boulder, CO	1997	

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Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Children of Gebelaawi	Awlād al-ḥāratinā		Passeggiata Press	Pueblo, Colo.	1997	2001: American University in Cairo Press, retranslated by Peter Theroux as Children of the Alley
Poetry	Ibn al-Khaṭīb, Lisān al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn ʿ Abd Allāh,	The Jaysh al-tawshīḥ of Lisān al-Dīn Ibn al-Khaṭīb : an anthology of Andalusian Arabic Muwashshaḥāt	Jaysh al-tawshīḥ	Alan Jones, ed.	Trustees of the E J W Gibb Memorial	Cambridge	1997	
Memoir	Mahfouz, Naguib	Echoes of an Autobiography	Aṣdā' al-sīrah al-dhātīyah	Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1997	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Day the Leader Was Killed	Yawma qutila al-zaʿīm	Malak Hashem	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1997	American University in Cairo Press: 2001 Anchor: 2000

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Poetry	Gibran, Kahlil	The beloved : reflections on the path of the heart		John Walbridge	Arkana	London	1997	
Fiction	Mamdouh, Alia	Mothballs	Ḥabbaṭ al-naftalīn	Peter Theroux	Garnet	Reading	1997	2005: The Feminist Press at the City University of New York as Naphtalene
Children's book	Samman, Ghada	Beirut Nightmares	Kawābīs Bayrūt	Nancy N. Roberts	Quartet	London	1997	2010
Fiction	al-Daif, Rachid	Dear Mr Kawabata	'Azīzī al-Sayyid Kawābātā	Paul Starkey	Quartet	London	1998	
Fiction	al-Kharrat, Edwar	City of Saffron	Turābuhā za'farān	Frances Liardet	Quartet	London	1998	
Fiction	al-Tahawy, Miral	The Tent	al-Khibā'	Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1998	
Short fiction	Abubaker Bagader, Ava M. Heinrichsdorff, Deborah S. Akers, eds.	Voices of Change : Short Stories by Saudi Arabian Women Writers		Abubaker Bagader, Ava M. Heinrichsdorff, Deborah S. Akers, Abdul-Aziz Al-Sebail	Lynne Rienner	Boulder, Colo.	1998	

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Fiction	Daoud, Hassan	The House of Mathilde	Bināyat Mātīld	Peter Theroux	Granta	London	1998	2002: New York Review of Books
Fiction	Idlibi, Ulfat	Grandfather's Tale	Ḥikāyat jaddī	Peter Clark	Quartet	London	1998	
Poetry	Kabbani, Nizar	Arabian Love Poems		Bassam K. Frangieh and Clementina R. Brown	Lynne Rienner	Boulder, Colo.	1998	
Fiction	Gibran, Kahlil,	Broken wings : a novel		Juan R. I. Cole	Arkana	London	1998	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Akhenaten, Dweller in Truth	'Ā'ish fī al-ḥaqīqah	Tagreid Abu Hassabo	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1998	2002: American University in Cairo Press 2000: Anchor Books
Short fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Fountain and Tomb	Ḥikāyāt ḥāratinā	Soad Sobhy, Essam Fattouh, James Kenneson	Lynne Rienner	Boulder, CO	1998	
Fiction	Ḥakīm, Tawfīq	In the tavern of life & other stories		Willam Maynard Hutchins.	Lynne Rienner Publisher,	Boulder CO	1998	

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Fiction	Munif, Abd al-Rahman	Endings	al-Nihāyāt	Roger Allen	Quartet, hardcover	London	1998	1998: Quartet, hardcover 2007: Interlink, paperback
Poetry	Qabbānī, Nizār	Arabian love poems		Bassam K. Frangieh and Clementina R. Brown.	Lynne Rienner	Boulder CO	1998	
Short fiction	Said al-Kafrawi	The Hill of Gypsies and Other Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1998	
Fiction	Algozaibi, Ghazi	Seven	Sab'a	Basil Hatim, Gavin Watterson	Saqi	London	1999	2001
Fiction	Charhadi, Driss ben Hamed	A Life Full of Holes		Paul Bowles	Rebel Inc.	Edinburgh	1999	
Short fiction	Idris, Yusuf	City of Love and Ashes	Qissat ḥubb	Neil Hewison	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	1999	1999: American University in Cairo Press, hardcover 2000: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Mirrors	Marāyā	Roger Allen	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	1999	2001, 2010

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Children's book	Mohammed-Khabbaz, Mojgan	A Puppy's Day Out		Seyed Mohsen Siavoshan Shirazi	Minerva	Atlanta	1999	
Fiction	Mosteghanemi, Ahlam	Memory in the Flesh	Dhākirat al-jasad	Baria Ahmar Sreih, revised translation Peter Clark	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	1999	2003: American University in Cairo Press, paperback 2008: Arabia
Memoir	Saadawi, Nawal	A Daughter of Isis : The Autobiography of Nawal El Saadawi		Sherif Hetata	Zed	London	1999	
Poetry	Collective ed. al-Udhari, Abdullah	Classical poems by Arab women		al-Udhari, Abdullah	Saqi	London	1999	
Drama	Clive Barker	The tragedy of Imam Hussein		Reza Alemohammed	BookExtra	London	1999	
Fiction	Salih, Tayeb	The Wedding of Zein and Other Stories	'Urs al-Zayn wa-sab' qīṣaṣ	Denys Johnson-Davies	L. Rienner	Boulder	1999	2010: NYRB Classics

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Poetry	Adonis	The Pages of Day and Night		Samuel Hazo	Marlboro Press/Northwestern	Evanston	2000	
Fiction	al-Zayyat, Latifa	The Open Door	al-Bāb al-maftūh	Marilyn Booth	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2000	2004: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Short fiction	Ahmed Fagih, ed.	Libyan stories : twelve short stories from Libya			Kegan Paul	London	2000	
Short fiction	Denys Johnson-Davies, ed. Collective	Under the Naked Sky : Short Stories from the Arab World		Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2000	2003, 2001: Saqi
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud Ed. By Munir Akash, Daniel Moore	The Adam of Two Edens		Husain Haddawi	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y.	2000	
Drama	Faqih, Aḥmad Ibrāhīm	Gazelles and other plays		Faqih, Aḥmad Ibrāhīm	Kegan Paul International,	London	2000	

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Short fiction	Faqih, Ahmed	Who's Afraid of Agatha Christie? and Other Short Stories	Man yakhāfu Ajathā Krīstī	Ahmed Faqih	Kegan Paul	London	2000	
Short fiction	Faqih, Ahmed	Charles, Diana, and me, and other stories	Tshārlz wa-Diyāna		Kegan Paul	London	2000	
Fiction	Faqih, Ahmed	Valley of ashes	Ḥuqūl al-ramaḍ		Kegan Paul	London	2000	
Fiction	Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim	In Search of Walid Masoud	Baḥth 'an Walid Mas'ūd	Roger Allen, Adnan Haydar	Syracuse University Press, hardcover	Syracuse, N.Y.	2000	
Short fiction	Kanafani, Ghassan	Palestine's Children : Returning to Haifa & Other Stories		Barbara Harlow, Karen E. Riley	Lynne Rienner	Boulder, Colo.	2000	
Poetry	Collective	The poetry of Arab women : a contemporary anthology		Collective, Ed. Natalie Handal	Interlink ; Roundhouse,	Northampton, Mass	2000	

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Fiction	Khalifeh, Sahar	Wild Thorns	Ṣubbār	Trevor LeGassick, Elizabeth Fernea	Saqi	London	2000	2005
Poetry	Collective	Modern Poetry of the Arab World		Abdullah al-Udhari.	Saqi	London	2000	
Memoir	Saadawi, Nawal	Memoirs of a Woman Doctor	Mudhakkirāt ṭabībah	Catherine Cobham	Saqi	London	2000	2008
Fiction	Telmissany, May	Dunyazad	Dunyāzād	Roger Allen	Saqi	London	2000	2006
Fiction	Wattar, Tahir	The Earthquake	al-Zilzāl	William Granara	Saqi	London	2000	
Fiction	al-Daif, Rachid	This Side of Innocence	Nāḥiyat al-barā'ah	Paula Haydar	Interlink Books	New York	2001	
Fiction	al-Daif, Rachid	Passage to Dusk	Ghaflat al-turāb	Nirvana Tanoukhi	University of Texas Press, paperback	Austin, Tex.	2001	
Fiction	Al-Shaykh, Hanan	Only in London	Innahā Landan yā 'azīzī	Catherine Cobham	Bloomsbury	London	2001	2009
Fiction	al-Takarli, Fuad	The Long Way Back	Raj` al-ba`īd	Catherine Cobham	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2001	2007
Fiction	Barakat, Hoda	The Tiller of Waters	Ḥārith al-miyāh	Marilyn Booth	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2001	2004: American University in Cairo Press 2008: Arabia

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Poetry	Margaret Obank, Samuel Shimon, eds. Collective	A Crack in the Wall: New Arab Poetry			Saqi	London	2001	2008
Poetry	Collective, ed. Tuetey, Charles Greville	Classical Arabic poetry: 162 poems from Imrulkais to Ma'arri		Tuetey, Charles Greville	Paul Keegan	London	2001	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Sand and Other Poems			Kegan Paul	London	2001	
Fiction	Ibrahim, Sonallah	Zaat	Dhāt	Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2001	
Fiction	Ibrahim, Sonallah	The committee	Lajnah	Mary St. Germain and Charlene Constable	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y.	2001	
Poetry	Kashgari, Badia	The Unattainable Lotus			Saqi	London	2001	
Fiction	Khedairi, Betool	A Sky So Close	Kam badat al-samā' qarībah	Muhayman Jamil	Pantheon Books, hardcover	New York	2001	2002: Anchor, paperback

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Cairo Trilogy		William Maynard Hutchins	Everyman	London	2001	
Poetry	Dikir, Jaber	Tug of love between heaven & hell: a collection of poems		Janan Dawood	Alexandra Sand International	London	2001	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Palace Walk	Bayna al-qasrayn	William M. Hutchins, Olive E. Kenny	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2001	
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	The Fall of the Imam	Suqūṭ al-Imām	Sherif Hetata	Saqi, paperback	London	2001	1988 Methuen 1990 Heinemann 2009 Telegram, paperback
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	Love in the Kingdom of Oil	Ḥubb fī zaman al-naft	Basil Hatim, Malcolm Williams	Saqi	London	2001	
Short fiction	Abdul-Wali, Mohammad	They Die Strangers		Abubaker Bagader, Deborah Akers	University of Texas Press	Austin, Tex.	2002	
Fiction	Algozaibi, Ghazi	A Love Story	Ḥikāyat ḥubb	Robin Bray	Saqi	London	2002	
Fiction	al-Kharrat, Edwar	Rama and the Dragon	Rāmah wa al-tinnīn	Ferial Ghazoul and John Verlenden	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2002	

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Fiction	al-Koni, Ibrahim	The Bleeding of the Stone	Nazīf al-ḥajar	May Jayyusi, Christopher Tingley	Interlink	New York	2002	2003 Arris
Short fiction	Al-Shaykh, Hanan	I Sweep the Sun off Rooftops		Catherine Cobham	Bloomsbury	London	2002	
Poetry	Mutanabbī, Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn,	He said to his prince & patron Sayf al-Dawla		Walid Abdul-Hamid and Nigel Wheale.	Peter Riley	Cambridge	2002	
Fiction	al-Tahawy, Miral	Blue Aubergine	al-Bādhinjānah al-zarqā'	Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2002	2006: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Fiction	Barghouti, Mourid	I Saw Ramallah	Ra'aytu Rām Allāh	Ahdaf Soueif	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2002	
Fiction	Berrada, Mohamed	Fugitive light	Ḍaw' al-hārib	Issa J. Boullata	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse	2002	
Short fiction/poetry	Farah, Najwa K.	Rose Stones of Jerusalem: a Book of Stories and Poems			Christians Aware	Leicester	2002	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Poetry	ʿArabī, Ibn	Perfect harmony: Sufi poetry of Ibn ʿArabī			Shambhala	Boston, Mass.	2002	
Fiction	Ramadan, Sumayyah	Leaves of Narcissus	Awraq al-narjis	Marilyn Booth	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2002	2004, 2007
Short fiction	Salem, Ibtihal	Children of the Waters		Marilyn Booth	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2002	2003: University of Texas Press
Fiction	Taher, Bahaa	Love in Exile	Ḥubb fī al-manfá	Farouk Abdel Wahab	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2002	2004: American University in Cairo Press 2008: Arabia
Fiction	Abouzeid, Leila	The Last Chapter	Faṣl al-akhīr	Leila Abouzeid and John Liechety	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2003	
Fiction	al-Hamad, Turki	Adama	al-ʿAddāmah: aṭyāf al-aziqqah al-mahjūrah	Robin Bray	Saqi	London	2003	
Poetry	Collective	Bedouin Poetry: from Sinai and the Negev		Clinton Baily	Saqi	London	2002	

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Fiction	al-Khatib, Muhammad Kamil	Just Like a River	Hākadhā ka al-nahr	Michelle Hartman, Maher Barakat	Arris	Moreton-in-Marsh	2003	
Fiction	Ashour, Radwa	Granada	Gharnāṭah	William Granara	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y.	2003	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Unfortunately, It Was Paradise: Selected Poems		Munir Akash, Carolyn Forché (with Sinan Antoon and Amira El-Zein)	University of California Press	Berkeley	2003	
Fiction	El Badry, Hala	A Certain Woman	Imra'atun mā	Farouk Abdel Wahab	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2003	2007: American University in Cairo Press 2008: Arabia
Poetry	Kabbani, Nizar Ed. By Lisa Kavchak	Republic of Love: Selected Poems in English and Arabic	Jumhūrīyah al-'Ishq	Nayef al-Kalali	Kegan Paul	London	2003	
Fiction	Khoury, Elias	Gate of the Sun	Bāb al-shams	Humphrey Davies	Harvill Secker	New York	2005	2006: Vintage
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Khufu's Wisdom	'Abath al-aqdār	Raymond Stock	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2003	2005: Anchor

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Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Rhadopis of Nubia	Rādūbīs	Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2003	2005: Anchor
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib, ed. By Mason Rossiter Smith	The Beginning and the End	Bidāyah wa-nihāyah	Ramses Awad	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2003	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Thebes at War	Kifāḥ Ṭībah	Humphrey Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2003	2005: Anchor
Short fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Voices From the Other World: Ancient Egyptian Tales		Raymond Stock	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2003	2004: Anchor
Poetry	Youssef, Saadi	Without an alphabet, without a face: selected poems of Saadi Youssef		Khaled Mattawa.	Graywolf	Saint Paul, Minn.	2003	
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	Two Women in One	Imra'atān fī imra'ah	Osman Nusairi, Jana Gough	Saqi	London	2003	1985, 2005

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Yakhlif, Yahya	A Lake Beyond the Wind	Buḥayrah warā'a al-rīḥ	May Jayyusi, Christopher Tingley	Arris	Moreton-in-Marsh	2003	
Poetry	Al-Massri, Maram	A Red Cherry on a White-tiled Floor: Selected Poems		Khaled Mattawa	Bloodaxe	Tarset	2004	
Short fiction	Al-Nasiri, Buthaina	Final Night: Short Stories		Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2004	2008: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Short fiction	Al-Nasser, Abdallah	The Tree & other stories		Dina Bosio, Christopher Tingley	Arris	Moreton-in-Marsh	2004	
Poetry	Collective	Sufi poems: a medieval anthology		Martin Lings.	Islamic Texts Society	Cambridge	2004	
Fiction	Aslan, Ibrahim	Nile Sparrows	'Aṣāfir al-Nīl	Mona El-Ghobashy	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2004	2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Fiction	Bisatie, Mohamed	Clamor of the Lake	Ṣakhab al-buḥayrah	Hala Halim	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2004	2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback

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Short fiction	Collective	Narrating Kuwait: a Collection of Kuwaiti Short Stories in English Translation		Layla Al-Maleh, Mohammed Farghal	The Academic Publication Council	Safat	2004	
Short fiction	Deborah S. Akers, Abubaker A. Bagader, eds. Collective	Oranges in the Sun: Contemporary Short Stories from the Arabian Gulf		Deborah S. Akers, Abubaker A. Bagader	Lynne Rienner	Boulder, Colo.	2004	2007
Poetry	Abdul Wahab Al-Bayati	Love, death, and exile		Bassam K. Frangieh	Georgetown University Press	Washington DC	2004	
Short fiction	Hakki, Yahya	The Lamp of Umm Hashim: And Other Stories	Qindīl Umm Hāshim	Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2004	2006
Fiction	Himmich, Bensalem	The Polymath	ʿAllāmah	Roger Allen	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2004	2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Short fiction	Ikhlassi, Walid	Whatever Happened to Antara?	Mā ḥadatha li- `Antarah	Asmahan Sallah, Chris Ellery	University of Texas Press, paperback	Austin, Tex.	2004	
Fiction	Mosteghanemi, Ahlem	Chaos of the Senses	Fawḍá al- ḥawāss	Baria Ahmar	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2004	
Memoir	Qutb, Sayyid	A child from the Village	Ṭifl min al- qaryah	John Calvert, William Shepard	Syracuse University Press, hardcover	Syracuse, N.Y.	2004	
Fiction	Saeed, Mahmoud	Saddam City		Ahmad Sadri	Saqi	London	2004	
Fiction	Abdel Meguid, Ibrahim	Birds of Amber	Ṭuyūr al- `anbar	Farouk Abdel Wahab	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2005	
Fiction	Al Aswany, Alaa	The Yacoubian Building	`Imārat Ya`qūbiyān	Humphrey Davies	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2005	2007: Harper Perennial, paperback
Fiction	al-Hakim, Tawfik	Diary of a Country Prosecutor	Yawmīhāt nā`ib fī al- aryāf	Abba Eban	Saqi	London	2005	1947: Harvill Press 1989: Saqi Books, entitled Maze of justice : diary of a country prosecutor. 2007: Saqi
Fiction	al-Hamad, Turki	Shumaisi	Shamīsī	Paul Starkey	Saqi	London	2005	
Fiction	al-Kharrat, Edwar	Stones of Bobello	Hijārat Būbīllū	Paul Starkey	Saqi	London	2005	

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Fiction	al-Koni, Ibrahim	Anubis: A Desert Novel		William M. Hutchins	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2005	
Fiction	Aslan, Ibrahim	The Heron	Mālik al-ḥazīn	Elliott Colla	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2005	2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Poetry	Khalil Gibran	Love letters in the sand: the love poems of Khalil Gibran			Souvenir	London	2005	
Fiction	Barakat, Hoda	Disciples of Passion	Ahl al-hawā	Marilyn Booth	Syracuse University Press, hardcover	Syracuse	2005	
Short fiction	Dalya Cohen-Mor	Arab Women Writers: An Anthology of Short Stories		Dalya Cohen-Mor	State University of New York Press	Albany, NY	2005	
Poetry	Adonis, Mahmud Darwish, Samih Al-Qasim	Victims of a map: a bilingual anthology of Arabic poetry		Abdullah al-Udhari	Saqi	London	2005	

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Short fiction	Salma Khadra Jayyusi, ed.	Modern Arabic Fiction: An Anthology			Columbia University Press	New York	2005	
Fiction	Himmich, Bensalem	The Theocrat	Majnūn al-ḥukm	Roger Allen	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2005	2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Poetry	Gibran, Kahlil	The eye of the prophet		Margaret Crosland	Souvenir	London	2005	
Poetry	Collective	The traces of song: selections from ancient Arabic poetry		Khazendar, Walid	St John's College Research Centre,	Oxford	2005	
Memoir	Jabra, Jabra Ibrahim	Princesses' Street: Baghdad Memories	Shāri' al-amīrāt	Issa J. Boullata	University of Arkansas Press	Fayetteville	2005	
Poetry	Nuwas, Abu	Poems of wine & revelry: the khamriyyat of Abu Nuwas		Jim Colville	Paul Keegan	London	2005	

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Fiction	Khalifeh, Sahar	The Inheritance	Mīrāth	Aida Bamia	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2005	
Fiction	Khedairi, Betool	Absent	Ghāyib	Muhayman Jamil	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2005	2009: Random House, paperback
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Dreams	Aḥlām fatrat al-naqāhah	Raymond Stock	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2005	2009: Anchor
Fiction	Samman, Ghada	The Night of the First Billion	Laylat al-milyār	Nancy N. Roberts	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y.	2005	
Short fiction	Abouzeid, Leila	The Director and Other Stories from Morocco		Leila Abouzeid	University of Texas Press, paperback	Austin, Tex.	2006	
Fiction	Abu Golayyel, Hamdi	Thieves in Retirement	Luṣuṣ mutaqa' idūn	Marilyn Booth	Syracuse University	Syracuse	2006	
Fiction	Abu Rayya, Yusuf	Wedding Night	Laylat 'urs	R. Neil Hewison	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2006	
Fiction	Alaidy, Ahmed	Being Abbas Elabd	An takūn 'Abbās al-'Abd	Humphrey Davies	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2006	2008: Arabia 2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback

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Short fiction	Roseanne Saad Khalaf, ed. collective	Hikayat: Short Stories by Lebanese Women			Telegram, paperback	London	2006	
Short fiction	Jo Glanville, ed. Collective	Qissat: Short Stories by Palestinian Women			Telegram, paperback	London	2006	
Poetry	Hussein, Ghazi	Taking it like a man: torture and survival; a journey in poetry		Hussein, Ghazi	Community InfoSource,	Glasgow	2006	
Short fiction	Denys Johnson-Davies, ed. collective	The Anchor Book of Modern Arabic Fiction			Anchor, paperback		2006	
Short fiction	Collective	Unbuttoning the Violin		Collective	Banipal	London	2006	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Why Did You Leave the Horse Alone?	Li-mādhā tarakta al-ḥiṣān waḥīdan	Jeffrey Sacks	Archipelago Books	Brooklyn, NY	2006	

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Poetry	Ibn al-‘ Arabī	The universal tree and the four birds: Treatise on unification	Risālat al-ittiḥād al-kawnī, Muḥyiddīn Ibn ‘Arabī	Jaffray, Angela	Anqa	Oxford	2006	
Fiction	El Badry, Hala	Muntaha	Muntahā	Nancy Roberts	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2006	2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Poetry	Huri, Yair	The Poetry of Sa‘ di Yūsuf: Between Homeland and Exile			Sussex Academic Press	Brighton	2006	
Autobiographical, memoir	Mahfouz, Naguib Ed. By Aleya Serour	Life’s Wisdom: From the Works of the Nobel Laureate		Aleya Serour	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2006	
Short fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Seventh Heaven: Stories of the Supernatural		Raymond Stock	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2006	

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Memoir	Makhzangi, Mohamed	Memories of a Meltdown: An Egyptian Between Moscow and Chernobyl	Laḥẓat gharaq jazīrat al-ḥūt	Samah Selim	American University in Cairo Press, paperback	Cairo	2006	2009
Fiction	Mamdouh, Alia	The Loved Ones	al-Maḥbūbāt	Marilyn Booth		Cairo	2006	2008: American University in Cairo Press 2008: Arabia
Poetry	Mikhail, Dunya	The War Works Hard		Elizabeth Winslow	Carcenet	Manchester	2006	
Poetry	Háfiz	The collected lyrics of Háfiz of Shíráz		Peter Avery	Archetype	Cambridge	2007	
Fiction	Nasr, Hassan	Return to Dar al-Basha	Dār al-Bāshā	William Hutchins	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y.	2006	
Fiction	Shalaby, Khairy	The Lodging House	Wakālat Aṭīyah	Farouk Abdel Wahab	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2006	
Fiction	Abdel Meguid, Ibrahim	Distant Train	Maṣāfāt	Hosam M. Aboul-Ela	Syracuse University	Syracuse	2007	
Fiction	Abu Hamad, Nabil	The Cripple			Banipal	London	2007	

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Poetry	Collective (from Arabic and Pushto)	Poems from Guantánamo: the detainees speak		Marc Falkoff	University of Iowa Press	Iowa City	2007	
Poetry	Gibran, Kahlil	The essential Gibran		Bushrui, Suheil B	Oneworld	Oxford	2007	
Fiction	Al Aswany, Alaa	Chicago	Shīkājū	Farouk Abdel Wahab	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2007	2009: Harper Perennial, paperback
Fiction	Al- Mohaimeed, Yousef	Wolves of the Crescent Moon	Fikhākh al-rā'ihah	Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2007	
Fiction	Al- Mohaimeed, Yousef	The Lure Of Scent		Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2007	
Fiction	al-Azzawi, Fadhil	The Last of the Angels		William M. Hutchins	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2007	2008: Free Press, paperback
Poetry	Ali, Taha Muhammad	So What: New & Selected Poems (with a story) 1971-2005		Peter Cole, Yahya Hijazi, Gabriel Levin	Bloodaxe	Tarset	2007	

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Fiction	Alsanea, Rajaa	Girls of Riyadh	Banāt al-Riyāḍ	Rajaa Alsanea, Marilyn Booth	Fig Tree	London	2007	2007: Penguin, hardcover 2008: Penguin, paperback
Fiction	Ashour, Radwa	Siraaj	Sirāj	Barbara Romaine	University of Texas at Austin	Austin, TX	2007	
Fiction	Bakr, Salwa	The Man from Bashmour	Bashmūrī	Nancy Roberts	American University in Cairo Press, Hardcover	Cairo	2007	
Short fiction	Peter Clark and collective, eds.	Sardines and Oranges		Collective	Banipal		2007	2005
Fiction	Daoud, Hassan	The Year of the Revolutionary New Bread-Making Machine		Randa Jarrar	Telegram	London	2007	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	The Butterfly's Burden		Fady Joudah	Bloodaxe	Tarset	2007	
Fiction	Ez-Eldin, Mansoura	Maryam's Maze	Matāhat Maryam	Paul Starkey	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2007	2009: American University in Cairo Press, paperback
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Karnak Café	al-Karnak	Roger Allen	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2007	2008: Anchor

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Poetry	Yaqub, Nadia G	Pens, swords, and the springs of art: the oral poetry dueling of Palestinian weddings in Galilee		Yaqub, Nadia G	Brill	Leiden	2007	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Morning and Evening Talk	Haḍīth al-ṣabāh wa al-masā'	Christina Phillips	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2007	2009: Anchor
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Three Novels of Ancient Egypt		Raymond Stock, Anthony Calderbank and Humphrey Davies	Alfred A. Knopf	New York	2007	
Poetry	Collective	Andalus: Moorish songs of love and wine		T J Gorton	Eland	London	2007	
Fiction	Nasrallah, Ibrahim	Inside the Night			American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2007	

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Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	Woman at Point Zero		Sharif Hetata	Zed	London	2007	1983, 2008
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	God Dies by the Nile	Mawt al-rajul al-waḥīd 'alá al-arḍ	Sharif Hetata	Zed	London	2007	1985
Short fiction	Shukair, Mahmoud	Mordechai's Moustache and His Wife's Cats and Other Stories		Issa J. Boullata	Banipal	London	2007	
Fiction	Zangana, Haifa	Women on a Journey: Between Baghdad and London	Nisā' 'alá safar	Judy Cumberbatch	University of Texas Press	Austin, Tex.	2007	
Fiction	Muhsin Mahdi, ed.	Sindbad and Other Tales from the Arabian Nights		Husain Haddawy	Norton	New York	2008	
Fiction	Abdullah, Yahya Taher	The Collar and the Bracelet	Tawq wa al-iswirah	Samah Selim	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2008	

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Poetry	Adonis	A Time Between Ashes and Roses	Waq̄t bayna al-rimād wa-alward	Shawkat M. Toorawa	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y	2008	
Poetry	Bustānī, Bushrā	Contemporary poetry from Iraq		Wafaa Abdullatif Abdulaali and Sanna Dhahir	Edwin Mellen	Lewiston NY	2008	
Poetry	Mirsāl, Imān	These are not oranges my love		Mattawa, Khaled	SheepMeadow	Riverdale-on-Hudson, N.Y	2008	
Poetry	Adonis	Mihyar of Damascus, his songs: poems	Aghānī Mihyār al-Dimashqī	Adnan Haydar, Michael Beard	BOA Editions	Rochester, NY	2008	
Short fiction	Al Khamissi, Khaled	Taxi	Tāksī: ḥawādīth al-mashāwīr	Jonathan Wright	Aflame, paperback	Laverstock	2008	
Fiction	al-Azzawi, Fadhil	Cell Block Five	Qal'ah al-khāmisah	William M. Hutchins	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2008	
Fiction	al-Koni, Ibrahim	The Seven Veils of Seth	Baḥṭh 'an al-makān al-ḍā'i'	William M. Hutchins	Garnet	Reading	2008	
Fiction	al-Koni, Ibrahim	Gold Dust	Tibr	Elliot Colla	Arabia	London	2008	

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Fiction	Al-Qazwini, Iqbal	Zubaida's Window	Mamarrat as-Sukoon	Azza El Kholly, Amira Nowaira	Feminist Press at the City University of New York	New York	2008	
Fiction	al-Tahawy, Miral	Gazelle Tracks	Naqarāt al-zibā'	Anthony Calderbank	Garnet, paperback	Reading	2008	
Fiction	Al-Wardani, Mahmoud	Heads Ripe for Plucking		Hala Halim	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2008	
Poetry	Barghouti, Mourid	Midnight and Other Poems	Muntaṣaf al-layl	Radwa Ashour	Arc Publications	Todmorden	2008	
Fiction	Bisatie, Mohamed	Hunger	Jū'	Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2008	
Short fiction	Ronak Husni & Daniel L. Newman, eds.	Modern Arabic Short Stories: a Bilingual Reader			Saqi	London	2008	

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Drama	Farag, Alfred & Amin, Dina	Alfred Farag and Egyptian theater: the poetics of disguise, with four short plays and a monologue			Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, NY	2008	
Short fiction	Collective	Translating Libya: the Modern Libyan Short Story		Ethan Chorin	Saqi	London	2008	
Fiction	Daoud, Hassan	Borrowed Time	Ayyām zā'idah	Michael K. Scott.	Telegram	London	2008	
Play	Etman, Ahmed	A Belle in the Prison of Socrates			Cambridge Scholars	Newcastle	2008	
Fiction	Hamdouchi, Abdelilah	The Final Bet		Jonathan Smolin	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2008	

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Fiction	Khalifeh, Sahar	The Image, the Icon, and the Covenant	Ṣūrah wa-ayqūnah wa-‘ahd qadīm	Aida Bamia	Interlink Books	Northampton, MA	2008	
Fiction	Khalifeh, Sahar	The End of Spring	Rabī’ ḥārr	Paula Haydar	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2008	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Cairo Modern	Qāhīrah al-jadīdah	William M. Hutchins	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2008	2009: Anchor
Short fiction	Mustagab, Mohamed	Tales from Dayrut		Humphrey Davies	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2008	
Short fiction	Taha, Mohammad Ali	Rose to Hafeeza’s Eyes and Other Stories		Jamal Assadi	Peter Lang	New York	2008	
Fiction	Taher, Bahaa	As Doha Said	Qālat Ḍuḥá	Peter Daniels	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2008	2009: Arabia
Poetry	Zoghaib, Henri	Intimate Verses		Adnan Haydar	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y	2008	
Short fiction	Abouzeid, Leila	Year of the Elephant	‘Ām al-fīl	Barbara Parmenter	University of Texas Press, paperback	Austin, Tex.	2009	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Abu Golayyel, Hamdi	A Dog With no Tail	Fā'il	Robin Moger	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Short fiction	Al Aswany, Alaa	Friendly Fire	Nīrān ṣadīqah	Humphrey Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	2009: Fourth Estate 2010: Fourth Estate
Fiction	al-Daif, Rachid	Learning English	Līrningh Inghlish	Paula and Adnan Haydar.	Arabia	London	2009	
Fiction	Al-Harez, Siba	The Others			Telegram	London	2009	
Poetry	Būṣīrī, Sharaf al-Dīn Muḥammad ibn Sa'īd	The mantle adorned: Imam al-Būṣīrī's Burda	Burda	translated, with further poetic ornaments, by Abdal Hakim Murad	Quilliam Press,	London	2009	
Memoir	Al-Shaykh, Hanan	The Locust and the Bird: My Mother's Story	Ḥikāyatī sharḥun yaṭūl	Roger Allen	Pantheon Books	New York	2009	

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Poetry	Mutanabbī, Abū al-Ṭayyib Aḥmad ibn al-Ḥusayn	Poems of Al-Mutanabbi: a selection with introduction		A.J. Arberry	Cambridge University Press,	Cambridge	2009	
Fiction	Bader, Ali	Papa Sartre	Bābā Sārtir	Aida Bamia	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2009	
Fiction	Berrada, Mohamed	Like a Summer Never to Be Repeated	Mithla ṣayf lan yatakarrar	Christina Phillips	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Fiction	Sa' id, Makkaḳwī,	Cairo swan song		Adam Talib.	Arabia	London	2009	
Poetry	Boulus, Sargon	Knife Sharpener		Boulus, Sargon	Banipal	London	2009	
Short fiction	Collective	Contemporary Iraqi Fiction		Collective	American University in Cairo Press	Syracuse	2009	2008: Syracuse University Press, hardcover
Poetry	Iskandar, Gharīb	A chariot of illusion: poems		Fathieh Saudi and Sally Thompson.	Exiled Writers Ink	London	2009	

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Short fiction	Collective	In a Fertile Desert: Modern Writing from the United Arab Emirates			Arabia	London	2009	2009: American University in Cairo Press
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	A River Dies of Thirst: Diaries			Saqi	London	2009	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	If I Were Another		Fady Joudah	Farrar, Straus and Giroux	New York	2009	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Almond Blossoms and Beyond	Ka-zahr al-lawz aw ab'ad	Mohammad Shaheen	Interlink	Northampton, MA	2009	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Mural	Jidārīyah	Rema Hammami, John Berger	Verso	London	2009	
Fiction	Eltayeb, Tarek	Cities without Palms		Kareem James Palmer-Zeid	Arabia, paperback	London	2009	2009: American University in Cairo Press, hardcover
Fiction	Gamal al-Ghitani	The Zafarani Files	Waqā'i' Ḥārat al-Za'farānī	Farouk Abdel Wahab	Arabia	London	2009	

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Short fiction	Ibrahim, Hanna	Father and Son: Selected Short Fiction		Jamal Assadi	Peter Lang	New York	2009	
Fiction	Ibrahim, Sonallah	Stealth	al-Talaṣṣuṣ	Hosam Aboul-Ela	Aflame	Laverstock	2009	
Fiction	Khoury, Elias	Yalo		Humphrey Davies	MacLehose	London	2009	2010
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	Before the Throne	Amāma al-'arsh	Raymond Stock	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Mirage		Nancy Roberts	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Poetry	Nasrallah, Ibrahim	Rain Inside: Selected Poems	Maṭar fī al-dākhil	Omnia Amin, Rick London	Curbstone Press	Willimantic, CT	2009	
Poetry	Nasser, Amjad	Shepherd of Solitude		Khaled Mattawa	Banipal	London	2009	

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Poetry	Collective	Desert voices: Bedouin women's poetry in Saudi Arabia (Library of Modern Middle East Studies)		Al-Ghadeer, Moneera	I. B. Tauris,	London	2009	
Poetry	Al-Sayegh, Adnan	The deleted part		Stephen Watts and Marga Burgui-Artajo.	Exiled Writers Ink	London	2009	
Short fiction	Oddoul, Haggag Hassan	Nights of Musk: Stories from Old Nubia		Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Fiction	Qandil, Muḥammad al-Mansī	Moon over Samarqand	Qamar 'alá Samarqand	Jennifer Peterson	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	The Novel	Riwāyah	Omnia Amin, Rick London	Interlink	Northampton	2009	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Saadawi, Nawal	The Circling Song	Ughniyat al-atfāl al-dā'irīyah	Fedwa Malti-Douglas	Zed	London	2009	1989
Play	Saadawi, Nawal	The Dramatic Literature of Nawal El Saadawi: Isis, God Resigns at Summit Meeting		Rihab Kassatly Bagnole, Sherif Hetata	Saqi	London	2009	
Fiction	Shalaby, Khairy	The Hashish Waiter		Andy Smart, Nadia Fouda-Smart	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Fiction	Shalaby, Khairy	The Time-Travels of the Man Who Sold Pickles and Sweets		Michael Cooper	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Poetry	Collective, ed. Ted Gorton	Voices of Arabia: a collection of the poetry of place		Collective, ed. Ted Gorton	Eland	London	2009	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Schami, Rafik	The Dark Side of Love		Anthea Bell	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Short fiction	Tāmir, Zakarīyā	The Hedgehog	Qunfudh	Brian O'Rourke, Denys Johnson-Davies	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2009	
Fiction	Yared, Nazik Saba	Cancelled Memories	Dhikrayāt al-mulghāh	Nadine Sinno	Syracuse University Press	Syracuse, N.Y.	2009	
Fiction	Younes, Iman Humaydan	B as in Beirut	Bā' mithla bayt - mithla Bayrūt	Max Weiss	Arabia	London	2009	
Fiction	Zangana, Haifa	Dreaming of Baghdad	Fī arwiqat al-dhākīrah	Paul Hammond, Haifa Zangana	Feminist	New York	2009	
Fiction	Al-Saqr, Mahdi Issa	East Winds, West Winds	Riyāh sharqīyah, riyāh gharbīyah	Paul Starkey	Arabia	London	2010	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Poetry	Collective	Moorish poetry: a translation of The pennants ; an anthology compiled in 1243 by the Andalusian Ibn Sa' id		A.J. Arberry.	Cambridge University Press,	Cambridge	2010	
Fiction	Ashour, Radwa	Specters		Barbara Romaine	Arabia	London	2010	
Fiction	Bisatie, Mohamed	Drumbeat	Daqq al-ṭubūl	Peter Daniel	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2010	
Short fiction	Samuel Shimon, ed.	Beirut39: New Writing from the Arab World			Bloomsbury	London	2010	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Habiby, Emile	The Secret Life of Saeed the Pessoptimist	Waqā'i' al-gharībah fī ikhtifā' Sa'īd Abī al-Nahs al-Mutashā'il	Trevor Le Gassick, Salma Khadra Jayyusi	Arabia	London	2010	1985: Zed 2003: Arris
Fiction	Ibrahim al-Koni	The Puppet		William M. Hutchins.	University of Texas Press	Austin, Texas	2010	
Fiction	Shimon, Samuel,	An Iraqi in Paris			Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation	London	2010	
Fiction	Kachachi, Inaam	The American Granddaughter		Nariman Youssef	Bloomsbury	London	2010	
Fiction	Collective	Classical Arabic stories: an anthology		Jayyusi, Salma Khadra.	Columbia University Press	New York	2010	
Fiction	Khoury, Elias	White Masks		Maia Tabet	Archipelago Books, hardcover	Brooklyn, NY	2010	
Fction	Mahfouz, Naguib	In the Time of Love		Kay Heikkinen	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2010	
Fiction	Mahfouz, Naguib	The Final Hour		Roger Allen	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2010	

Category	Author surname, name	Title in translation	Original title	Translator	Publisher	Place of publication	Year	1 st edition or reprint
Fiction	Meguid, Bahaa Abdel	Saint Theresa and Sleeping with Strangers	Sānt Tirīzā	Bahaa Abdel Meguid	American University in Cairo Press	Cairo	2010	
Fiction	Al- Mohaimeed, Yousef	Munira's Bottle	Qārūrah	Anthony Calderbank	American University in Cairo Press, hardcover	Cairo	2010	
Fiction	Selmi, Habib	The Scents of Marie-Claire	Rawā'ih Mārī klīr	Fadwa Al Qasem	Arabia, paperback	London	2010	2010: American University in Cairo Press, hardcover
Fiction	Taher, Bahaa	Sunset Oasis	Wāḥat al-ghurūb	Humphrey Davies	Sceptre	London	2010	2009: Sceptre 2009: McClelland & Stewart 2010: Emblem Editions
Fiction	Younes, Iman Humaydan	Wild Mulberries	Tūt barrī	Michelle Hartman	Arabia	London	2010	
Poetry	Collective	The mantle odes: Arabic praise poems to the Prophet Muhammad		Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych	Bloomington, Ind. : Chesham	Bloomington, Ind. : Chesham	2010	

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Poetry	Adonis	Adonis: Selected Poems		Khaled Mattawa	Yale University Press	New Haven	2010	
Poetry	Darwish, Mahmoud	Absent Presence			Hesperus	London	2010	
Drama	Collective	Plays from the Arab World		Various	Nick Hern Books	London	2010	

11 Contributors

Authors

Alexandra Büchler is Director of Literature Across Frontiers and editor of its series of surveys and studies on promotion of literature, literary exchange and the publishing of translated literature, *Making Literature Travel*. She has worked as cultural manager for over twenty-five years and is also a literary translator and editor.

Alice Guthrie is a free-lance literary translator, writer and researcher. As part of her BA in Arabic with Translation from the University of Exeter, she spent two years studying at IFEAD (now IFPO) in Damascus. In addition to extensive literary scouting and reporting on Arab authors for various UK publishers and English PEN, she has carried out diverse research projects for Literature Across Frontiers, the International Association of Contemporary Iraqi Studies, Wapapura Sustainable Sounds, and for grass-roots refugee activist networks. She has translated several Palestinian authors, including Ala Hlehel and Atef Abu Saif, and several selected for Beirut39, most recently the Egyptian Mohamed Salah Al-Azab (as part of Saqi's January 2011 volume *Emerging Arab Voices*).

Research Assistants

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