



The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize  
for Arabic Literary Translation  
**2019 Annual Lecture**

**HANAN AL-SHAYKH**

**My Travels through Cultures,  
Languages and Writing – from  
Abu Nuwas to Bint Al-Shaykh**

**7pm, Thursday, 7 November 2019**

**Knowledge Centre, British Library  
96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB**



## The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation

The **Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation** is an annual prize of £3,000, awarded to the translator(s) of a published translation in English of a full-length imaginative and creative Arabic work of literary merit and general interest, published in the original Arabic after, or during, the year 1967 – widely recognised as a ‘watershed’ year for Arabic literature – and first published in English translation in the year prior to the award.

Entries are judged by a panel of four distinguished authors, critics and literary experts, two of whom read and consider both the Arabic original and the English translation. The prize is administered by the Society of Authors in the UK, as are other prizes for literary translation into English from European languages, with the Award Ceremony hosted by the Society.

The call for entries opens on 31 October each year, and the deadline for both entries and publication of works each year is 31 March. The prize, the first worldwide for a published work of English literary translation from Arabic, was established in 2005 by *Banipal*, the magazine of modern Arab literature in English translation, and the Banipal Trust for Arab Literature. After its first year’s patronage by Mohammad Ahmad Al-Sowaidi, the prize has been wholly sponsored by Omar Saif Ghobash and his family, and named in memory of his father, the late Saif Ghobash, a man passionate about Arabic literature and other literatures of the world.

To mark the tenth year of the prize in 2015, Omar Saif Ghobash and his family generously extended their sponsorship to include the establishment of this **Annual Lecture**, whose purpose is to create an opportunity to engage in the expansion and enrichment of dialogue between cultures through the power of translated literature, which creates vital openings for new perceptions, new knowledge and appreciations. The inaugural lecture took place at the British Library, London, on 14 October 2016, with speaker Anton Shammas, poet and Professor of Arabic Literature at the University of Michigan. The 2017 Lecture was given by historian and scholar Robert Irwin, and the 2018 Lecture by poet, philosopher and author Adonis.

[www.banipaltrust.org.uk](http://www.banipaltrust.org.uk)

For more about the prize and the lecture go to: [www.banipaltrust.org.uk](http://www.banipaltrust.org.uk)  
or email: [info@banipaltrust.org.uk](mailto:info@banipaltrust.org.uk)

*Bookstall at the Lecture courtesy of West End Lane Books*



## Hanan al-Shaykh

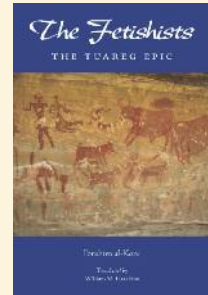
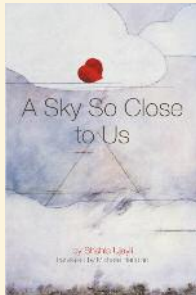
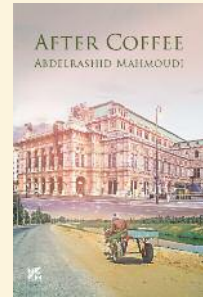
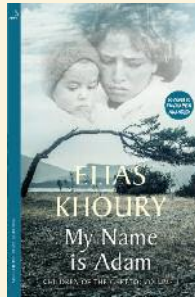
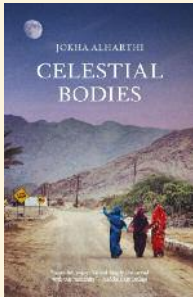
In this year's Lecture Hanan Al-Shaykh, the internationally acclaimed Lebanese novelist and playwright, discusses her writing and how it continues on the path of ancient Arabic literary traditions and the great 8th-century poet Abu Nuwas in being open and bold in tackling subjects such as sexuality and feminism.

When Hanan Al-Shaykh first discovered the 1,220-year-old lyric poems and wine songs of the great poet Abu Nuwas she was already making her own waves as a young journalist on Beirut's daily *An-Nahar* newspaper and on *Al-Hasna*, a magazine for women. She had embarked on a ground-breaking series of interviews with 21 prominent Lebanese women, including the first woman politician, the first judge, the first doctor, and Anbara Salam Khalidi, the first woman in Lebanon to abandon the veil.

Hanan was inspired by Layla Baalbaki's revolutionary novel *Ana Ahya* (I Live), a powerful protest for individual liberty against oppressive patriarchy, while in '60s Beirut Russian, French and English classics translated into Arabic were very popular. Hanan was reading these as well as Arabic literature, and especially works of the existentialist movement, in English and Arabic. Earlier in Cairo, as a student, she immersed herself in the greats of Egyptian literature, and it was there that her writing career took off as she finished her first novel, *Suicide of a Dead Man*.

Hanan al-Shaykh's works feature female protagonists who struggle to be free of social, patriarchal and religious restrictions, but she never labels herself an "Arab feminist writer". Her latest novel in English translation, *The Occasional Virgin*, published last year, never ceases to entertain and "intrigues on many levels" in its discussions of religion and sex. Her first to be translated, *The Story of Zahra*, was followed by *Women of Sand and Myrrh*, *Beirut Blues* and *Only in London*, shortlisted for the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, plus the short story collection *I Sweep the Sun off Rooftops*. *The Locust and the Bird* is the highly acclaimed memoir of her mother's life. Her plays include *Dark Afternoon Tea* and *Paper Husband*. One of her recent works, *One Thousand and One Nights*, is a thrilling retelling of stories from the *Arabian Nights* (*Alf Layla wa Layla*). Her works are translated into 21 languages around the world. Hanan al-Shaykh holds an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from the American University of Beirut, and in June this year was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature.

# The 2019 prize . . .



## THE ENTRIES

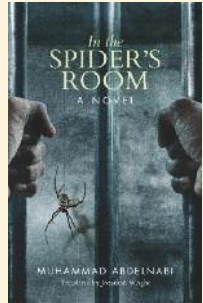
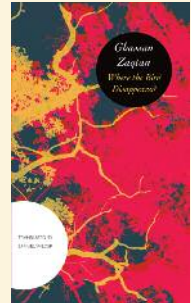
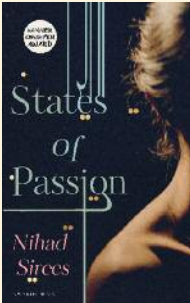
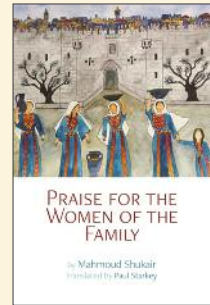
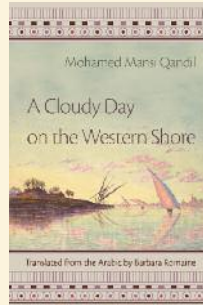
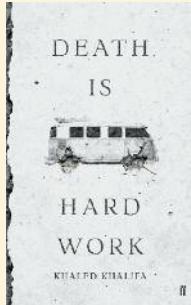
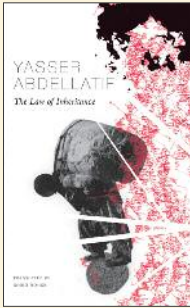
- *Celestial Bodies* by Jokha Alharthi, translated by Marilyn Booth (Sandstone Press Ltd, June 2018)
- *My Name is Adam: Children of the Ghetto, Volume I* by Elias Khoury, translated by Humphrey Davies (MacLehose Press, UK / Archipelago Books, US)
- *Jerusalem Stands Alone* by Mahmoud Shukair, translated by Nicole Fares (Syracuse University Press, April 2018)
- *After Coffee* by Abdelrashid Mahmoudi, translated by Nashwa Gowanlock (Hamad

- Bin Khalifa University Press, May 2018)
- *A Sky So Close to Us* by Shahla Ujayli, translated by Michelle Hartman (Interlink Books, March 2019)
- *Printed in Beirut* by Jabbour Douaihy, translated by Paula Haydar (Interlink Books, August 2018)
- *All That I Want to Forget* by Bothayna Al-Essa, translated by Michele Henjum (Hoopoe Fiction, December 2018)
- *The Fetishists* by Ibrahim al-Koni, translated by William M. Hutchins (CMES, Univ. Texas

### THE JUDGES:

**Ghazi Gheblawi** (Chair), author and publisher; **Jan Fortune**, publisher and writer; **Abla Oudeh**, lecturer in Arabic studies and translator; **Catherine Taylor**, journalist, editor and literary critic.

# ... in progress



Press, November 2018)

- *The Law of Inheritance* by Yasser Abdellatif, translated by Robin Moger (Seagull Books, August 2018)
- *Death is Hard Work* by Khaled Khalifa, translated by Leri Price (Faber & Faber, March 2019)
- *A Cloudy Day on the Western Shore* by Mohamed Mansi Qandil, translated by Barbara Romaine (Syracuse University Press, October 2018)
- *Praise for the Women of the Family* by Mahmoud Shukair, translated by Paul

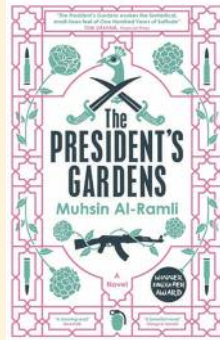
Starkey (Interlink Books, March 2019)

- *States of Passion* by Nihad Sirees, translated by Max Weiss (Pushkin Press, September 2018)
- *Where the Bird Disappeared* by Ghassan Zaqtan, translated by Samuel Wilder (Seagull Books, July 2018)
- *In the Spider's Room* by Mohamed Abdelnabi, translated by Jonathan Wright (Hoopoe Fiction, September 2018)
- *Jokes for the Gunmen* by Mazen Maarouf, translated by Jonathan Wright (Granta Books, January 2019).

## IMPORTANT DATES

**1 December 2019: Announcement of the Shortlist; 13 January 2020: Announcement of the Winner; 12 February 2020: Award Ceremony of all Translation Prizes, hosted by the Society of Authors; 13 February 2020: Banipal Trust Winner Celebration**

# 2018



**WINNER**

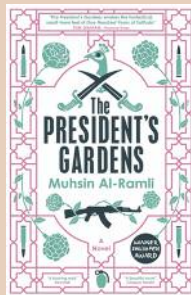
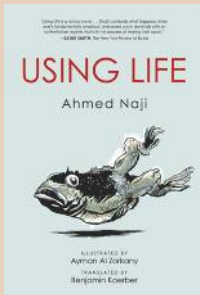
**Luke Leafgren**

for *The President's Gardens*  
by Muhsin al-Ramli,  
published by MacLehose Press, UK,  
April 2017

**“A seamless rendering of an  
outstanding work of fiction”**

This translation by Luke Leafgren is imperceptible and mirrors the writer's many changes of register. The author is fortunate to have found a translator totally in sympathy with his writing. Faced with many difficult choices, Leafgren has produced a work both faithful to the Arabic and a work of art in English. Tender, funny, tragic, wise and poetic, *The President's Garden* is imbued with the richness and complexity of a region that has known little peace over the last century. Luke Leafgren's translation conveys beautifully the spirit and idiosyncrasies of the original.

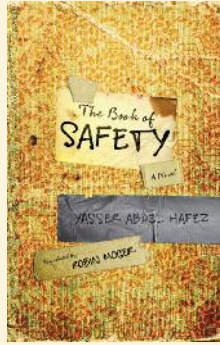
## SHORTLIST



THE SHORTLIST: *Using Life* by Ahmed Naji (Egypt), translated by Ben Koerber (CMES Publications, University of Texas at Austin); *The President's Gardens* by Muhsin Al-Ramli (Iraq), translated by Luke Leafgren (MacLehose Press); *Concerto al-Quds* by Adonis (Syria), translated by Khaled Mattawa (Yale University Press); *Frankenstein in Baghdad* by Ahmed Saadawi (Iraq), translated by Jonathan Wright (Oneworld)

**THE JUDGES: Pete Ayrton** (Chair), publisher & translator; **Georgia de Chamberet**, editor and translator; **Fadia Faqir**, Jordanian author; **Sophia Vasalou**, university lecturer and translator.

# 2017



## WINNER

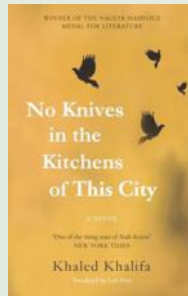
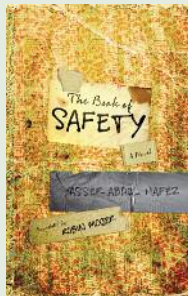
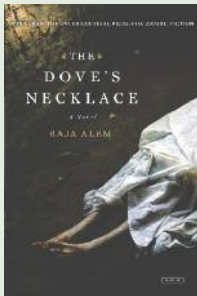
### Robin Moger

for *The Book of Safety* by Yasser Abdel Hafez, published by Hoopoe Fiction (AUC Press), Egypt, January 2017.

**“An alluring translation that captures beautifully the nuances of the Arabic original”**

Robin Moger’s translation captures beautifully the moods, paces, rhythms and nuances of the Arabic original and, ruthlessly but lovingly, lures us into the conflicting, conspiratorial, and violent world that it draws. He makes us believe this is our world, the very world we live in, and we care about the characters and their shenanigans, look out for whispers that will give their secrets away, and cannot wait until we know their fate. A relatively new voice in Arabic literary translation, the full force of his talent is certain to be felt in the years to come.

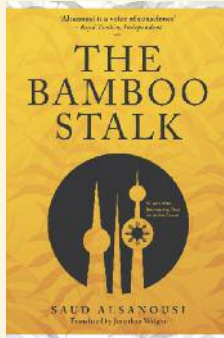
## FIRST SHORTLIST



THE FIRST SHORTLIST: *The Dove's Necklace* by Raja Alem (Saudi Arabia), translated by Katharine Halls and Adam Talib (Duckworth); *The Book of Safety* by Yasser Abdel Hafez (Egypt), translated by Robin Moger (Hoopoe); *No Knives in the Kitchens of This City* by Khaled Khalifa (Syria), translated by Leri Price (Hoopoe Fiction); *Limbo Beirut* by Hilal Chouman (Lebanon), translated by Anna Ziajka Stanton (CMES, University of Texas Press)

**THE JUDGES:** **Dr Alistair Niven** (Chair), writer & literary figure; **Peter Kalu**, author and editor; **Wen-chin Ouyang**, Professor of Arabic & Comparative Literature; **Salam Sarhan**, poet and journalist.

# 2016



## WINNER

### Jonathan Wright

for *The Bamboo Stalk* by Saud Alsanousi, published by Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing (now HBKU Press), Qatar

**"A 'page-turner' translation with a universal appeal"**

"The judges were unanimous in deciding to award this year's prize to Jonathan Wright for his translation of Saud Alsanousi's *The Bamboo Stalk*. "Originally published in Arabic in 2012, *The Bamboo Stalk* is a daring work which takes a critical but objective look at the phenomenon of foreign workers in the Arab countries of the Gulf. The novel examines problems of race, religion and identity through the life of a half-Filipino, half-Kuwaiti young man, who moves from an impoverished life in the Philippines to return to his father's Kuwait – a 'paradise', as his Filipina mother has described it to him since he was a child. The Arabic work had already won the author the 2013 International Prize for Arabic Fiction, and the judges found in the book the same qualities that had commended it to the IPAF jury. It combines a daring choice of subject with a tight but subtle literary structure and an approach to a highly charged and emotional subject matter that is both sensitive and measured.

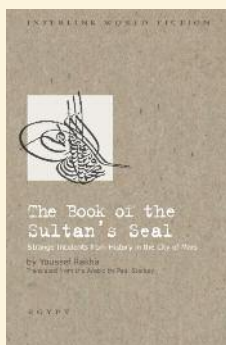
"The judges questioned the omission, in the English publication, of the Arabic edition's 'second title page' – which had added an additional structural twist to the original work – but this was not felt to detract from the quality of the translation itself. Jonathan Wright's seamless English rendering does full justice to the original, exhibiting a sureness of touch that fully captures the spirit of the Arabic version. Although the particular cultural context of the work will be unfamiliar to many English-speaking readers, Wright's 'page-turner' translation has a universal appeal, and it is difficult not to be moved by the predicament of the narrator, with his dual identity of Isa and José, as he comes to terms with the reality of life in Kuwait.

"The judges discussed at length a number of other entries – including some by younger translators – with a view to naming a runner-up, but after extensive discussion decided not to do so on this occasion. The translators had tackled challenging works with equally impressive results, but none came close to matching the broad appeal that the judges discerned in *The Bamboo Stalk*, and in these circumstances it was felt inappropriate to single out any particular work to be named as runner-up."

**THE JUDGES:** Paul Starkey (Chair), Emeritus Professor & winner of the 2015 prize; Lucy Popescu, author and journalist; Zahia Smail Salhi, lecturer and translator; Bill Swinson, editor and literary consultant.



# 2015



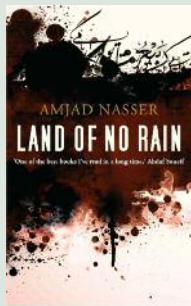
**WINNER**

**Paul Starkey**

for *The Book of the Sultan's Seal: Strange Incidents from History in the City of Mars* by Youssef Rakha, published by Interlink Books (US)

"One of the most adventurous and innovative novels to have appeared in Arabic in recent years and its English version is a tour

de force of translation," said the judges. "This text confronts the translator with extraordinary challenges. It mirrors the fundamental tension in the book between the heritage and modernity by constant reference to the classical literary tradition. The author chooses the pre-modern form of 'epistles' or 'treatises' for his rambling narrative, and the language of the text swings from the most formal classical Arabic to the most contemporary vernacular, along with extraordinary fusions of linguistic registers. Paul Starkey addresses these problems with great skill, and has produced a masterly English version of this riotous, chaotic and often comedic story, which is also deeply moving."



**COMMENDED**

**Jonathan Wright**

for *Land of No Rain* by Amjad Nasser, published by Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing

"The outstanding feature of this book is its highly poetically charged prose . . . rendered into English with a sureness of stylistic touch

which does complete justice to the Arabic original." The judges were deeply impressed by Jonathan Wright's translation of *Land of No Rain*, "an inspired and inspiring account of that perennial theme of modern Arab experience: exile and return".

**THE JUDGES: Robin Ostle** (Chair), Emeritus Research Fellow at St John's College, Oxford; **Samira Kawar**, literary translator; **Alastair Niven**, lecturer and writer; **Susannah Tarbush**, cultural journalist and blogger.

# 2014



## WINNER

### Sinan Antoon

for his translation of his own novel  
***The Corpse Washer***,  
published by Yale University Press

The judges stated that ***The Corpse Washer*** is “heart-warming and horrifying, sad and sensuous in equal measure. It is

the moving story of Jawad, a young Iraqi whose family washes and prepares bodies for burial, and of the fracturing effects of war, occupation and civil strife – on Jawad, his family, his friends and their country .

“Thoughtful, precise and consistent in voice and mood, Sinan Antoon comes close, in this translation of his own novel, to the ideal in literary translation – the invisibility of the translator. His fluent and forthright language matches the style and rhythm of his own original Arabic and the unadorned, sometimes affectless tone reflects the hollowness of life as the onslaught of war brings an onslaught of bodies for the corpse washers of Baghdad. The novel ends with Jawad sitting under the pomegranate tree that grows from the water he uses to wash the corpses. A rich, profound insight into an Iraq we hear very little of, this is a story that resonates with human pathos and bears every hallmark of becoming a modern classic.”



## HIGHLY COMMENDED

### Paula Haydar

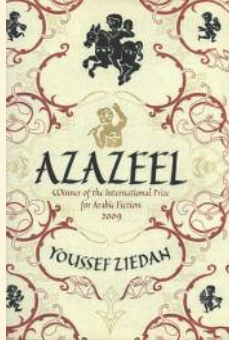
for ***June Rain*** by Jabbour Douaihy,  
published by  
Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing

“Paula Haydar’s astonishing translation exactly captures the tone and heft of an extraordinary novel that tells us so much about sectarianism and its heartbreaking legacies. Lyrical and at times wistful, Douaihy’s novel, part tragedy, part ‘whodunnit’, is rendered through a kaleidoscope of superb stories and characters.”

**THE JUDGES:** Literary translator and joint winner of the 2013 Prize  
**Jonathan Wright**, translator/writer **Lulu Norman**, broadcaster/  
writer **Paul Blezard**, Banipal editor and trustee **Samuel Shimon**

# 2013

## JOINT WINNERS

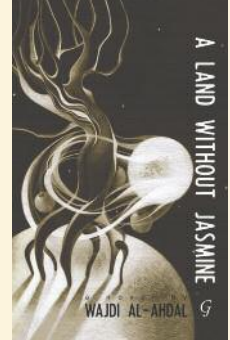


### Jonathan Wright

for *Azazeel* by Youssef Ziedan,  
published by Atlantic Books

"A masterful achievement. *Azazeel* is an enthralling book. The author, and translator, have evoked, and re-evoked, a time, a region, and people that come alive on the page despite our distance from them. The conflicts of the day between tolerance and anathematization – so reminiscent of those of our own time – are seamlessly embodied in the events . . . The translation is notable for its delicacy and well-judged restraint and deftly captures the feeling of the original.

"A beautifully crafted and evocative tale. Rich in description of the arid Syrian landscape and steeped in early history, *Azazeel* has been flawlessly translated, making this an easily accessible story."



### William M Hutchins

for *A Land Without Jasmine*  
by Wajdi al-Ahdal,  
published by Garnet Publishing (UK)

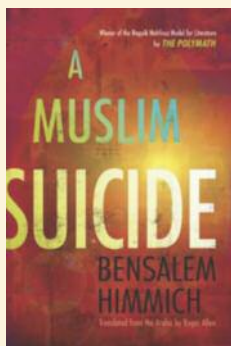
"Altogether a gripping page-turner from a talented writer, superbly translated by William Maynard Hutchins.

"Through its use of multiple perspectives we are given a revealing insight into society, reminding us that no event, or place, has an objective existence or truth. Wajdi al-Ahdal is a gifted and original storyteller.

"*A Land Without Jasmine* gives fascinating insight on life in Yemen, with a thriller-like plot . . . In sparse, lucid prose with a tight narrative structure, the author paints a riveting portrait of sexual confusion, frustration and shame. The translation succeeded in creating an enjoyable English read and at the same time preserving the soul of the original."

**THE JUDGES:** Translator, twice winner and twice runner-up of the prize  
**Humphrey Davies**, playwright **Hassan Abdulrazzak**, and authors  
**Rajeev Balasubramanyam** and **Meike Ziervogel**.

# 2012



## WINNER

### Roger Allen

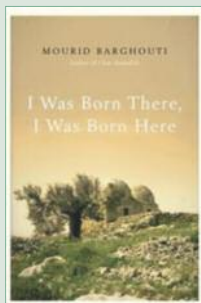
for *A Muslim Suicide* by Bensalem Himmich, published by Syracuse University Press (USA)

"A highly ambitious and erudite work that opens up remarkable historical, cultural and religious perspectives on the Islamic

heritage. It is a highly challenging, yet deeply enriching read in its English translation. This is chiefly due, however, to the immense insight and long and hard-earned cultural and linguistic awareness of its translator.

"It is very hard indeed to imagine anyone besides Roger Allen capable of bringing this serious book alive to English readers. All those able, even briefly, to browse a little of the Arabic original would quickly recognize the translation as a major achievement.

"It is a major work of translation [that impressed all the judges] with its remarkable sophistication and ambition, its rich philosophical and literary tapestry, and the seamless way in which it has been translated."



## RUNNER-UP

### Humphrey Davies

for *I was Born There, I Was Born Here* by Mourid Barghouti, published by Bloomsbury Publishing (UK/USA)

"Humphrey Davies catches the spirit of the original text and lets us feel and enjoy the beauty of his English prose. He has adopted exactly the

right palette of both vocabulary and tone right the way through, giving readers the beautifully rendered revisiting of a riven landscape. In this fluid translation of a thoughtful and moving book he manages a rare thing – to make you feel you are reading the book in the language in which it was written."

**THE JUDGES:** Authors **Ruth Padel** and **Esther Freud**, author and translator **Fadhil al-Azzawi**, translator **John Peate**

# 2011



**WINNER**

**Khaled Mattawa**

for *Adonis: Selected Poems*,  
published by Yale University Press  
(USA/UK)

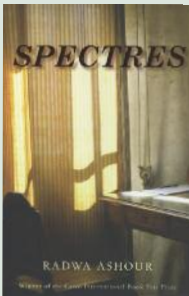
“Khaled Mattawa’s translation of this selection of Adonis’s poetry is destined to become a classic. It is a monumental

piece of work, a long-overdue compendium of works by one of the most important poets of our time, a contribution to world literature that demonstrates the lyricism and full range of Adonis’s poetry. Anglophone readers will gain a new appreciation of why Adonis has so often been likened to TS Eliot and Ezra Pound, with the freshness of his lines and imagination liberated from the self-conscious archaism of other translations, and allowing his unique reworking of the legends of East and West, the arcs of love and death, to spring forth.

“Khaled Mattawa has brought Adonis’s poems to the English language with a musicality and aesthetic sensitivity that echo their innovative, conceptual and stylistic complexities – and in doing so he has created an original, powerful and lyrical poetic work in English. In a word: stunning.”

**RUNNER-UP**

**Barbara Romaine**

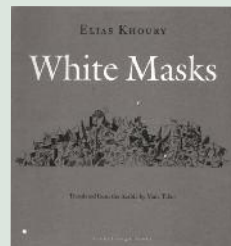


for *Spectres* by  
Radwa Ashour,  
published by  
Arabia Books (UK),  
Interlink Books  
(USA)

“Impressive  
translation – fluent  
and refreshing”

**COMMENDED**

**Maia Tabet**

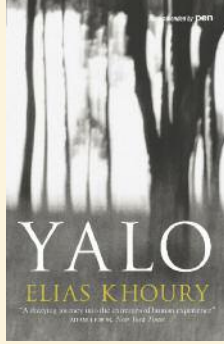


for  
*White Masks*  
by Elias Khoury,  
published by  
Archipelago  
Books (USA)

“A masterful  
translation”

**THE JUDGES:** Professor and broadcaster **Sarah Churchwell**,  
journalist **Joan Smith**, academic and translator **Christina Phillips**,  
Banipal editor and trustee **Samuel Shimon**

# 2010



**WINNER**

**Humphrey Davies**

for *Yalo* by Elias Khoury,  
published by Maclehose Press (UK)

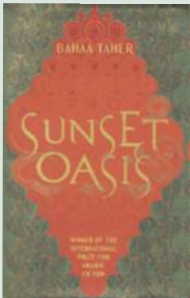
“This novel is a tour de force for both author and translator. It is a powerful, moving book that works on many levels . . . The

judges this year were impressed by the sensitivity of the winning translation and its ability to take the reader into the inner recesses of Yalo’s mind and soul in an intimate way. The simple but exquisitely crafted prose lines create a narrative free of the clutter which is sometimes present in translations of Arabic fiction. The authentic voice of the author comes through rather than that of a univocal translator who renders different texts in a near monochrome fashion.

“Humphrey Davies’s seamless translation hides the skill with which he works here. The language of this novel is notoriously difficult. Davies renders this difficulty in a fluent British idiom, but never at the expense of the complexities of the original.”

**RUNNER-UP**

**Humphrey Davies**

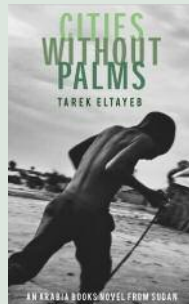


for *Sunset Oasis*  
by Baha Taher,  
published by  
Sceptre (UK)

“... the  
virtuosity of  
Humphrey  
Davies”

**RUNNER-UP**

**Kareem James Abu-Zeid**

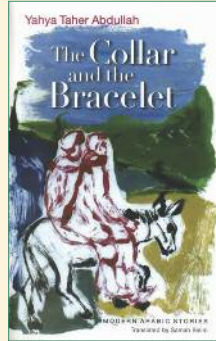


for *Cities without  
Palms*  
by Tarek Eltayeb,  
published by  
Arabia Books  
(UK)

“A skilful and  
unobtrusive  
translation”

**THE JUDGES:** Author **Margaret Drabble**, Professor **Susan Bassnett**, professor and translator **Elliot Colla**, and Banipal trustee Professor **Yasir Suleiman**

# 2009



**WINNER**

**Samah Selim**

for *The Collar and the Bracelet* by the late Yahya Taher Abdullah, published by American University in Cairo Press

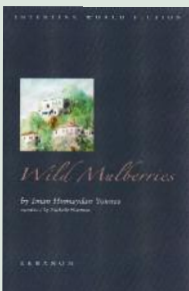
“This wonderful translation captures a particular style of narrative, written a third of a century ago but entirely modern.

*The Collar and the Bracelet* is the author’s most famous and enduring literary monument: a collection of short stories originally, combined into a novel it manages to place its reader into a fishbowl society, where traditional mores, family feuds, and elemental passions all come into play as part of the narrative. The translation succeeds admirably in conveying all these facets of Abdullah’s style and technique.

“Samah Selim has been able to catch the Upper Egyptian and folkloric rhythms – and their utterly unromantic yoking to the everyday grimness and intimacy of modern realities – that Abdullah pioneered in his fiction.”

**RUNNER-UP**

**Michelle Hartman**



for *Wild Mulberries* by Iman Humaydan, published by Interlink Books (USA)

“Mirrors the original’s narrative traits”

**RUNNER-UP**

**Elliot Colla**



for *Gold Dust* by Ibrahim al-Koni, published by Arabia Books (UK)

“Excellent translation”

**THE JUDGES:** Author **Aamer Hussein**, journalist and broadcaster  
**Francine Stock**, professor and translator **Marilyn Booth**, professor  
and translator **Roger Allen**

# 2008



**WINNER**

**Fady Joudah**

for *The Butterfly's Burden*, selected poetry of Mahmoud Darwish in a bilingual edition, Bloodaxe (UK), Copper Canyon (USA)

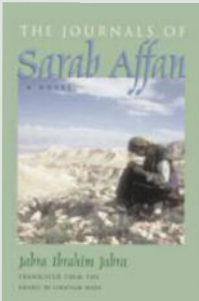
"The translator's sensitivity to the nuances and music of the original texts is already

evident in the way in which the poetry is introduced and the translation process discussed in the Preface. Darwish is there described as 'a songmaker whose vocabulary is accessible but whose mystery is not bashful.' The resulting versions in English replicate, deliberately so, the structures of the original poems that parallel them on the opposite pages. The poems can be read . . . as wonderful transfers of the images and music of the Arabic poems.

"It goes without saying that this bilingual anthology is a major achievement. Darwish's recent contributions to contemporary Arabic poetry and to the literary tradition of his Palestinian people – most especially the siege poem emerging from the Second Intifada – are here made available in a carefully produced and beautifully translated volume."

**RUNNER-UP**

**Ghassan Nasr**

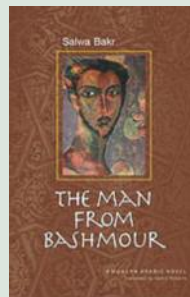


for *The Journals of Sarab Affan* by Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, published by Syracuse University Press (USA)

" . . . transfers the nuances"

**COMMENDED**

**Nancy Roberts**



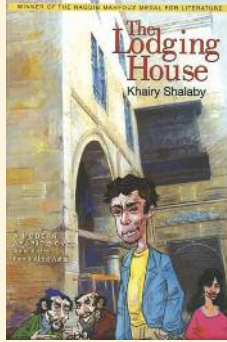
for *The Man from Bashmour* by Salwa Bakr, published by American University in Cairo Press (Egypt/US)

" . . . highly complex"

**THE JUDGES:** Professor and translator **Marilyn Booth**, author **Aamer Hussein**, editor **Bill Swainson**, and professor and translator **Roger Allen**



# 2007



**WINNER**

**Farouk Abdel Wahab**

for *The Lodging House* by Khairy Shalaby, published by American University in Cairo Press (Egypt/US)

*"The Lodging House is a wise, anarchic, ribald, compassionate compendium of life at its most precarious and most ebullient. Its*

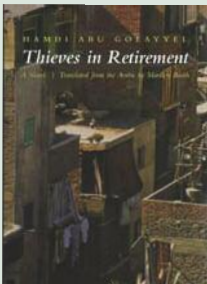
narrator is a young drop-out expelled from teachers' college for assaulting an instructor who picked on him as 'barefoot riffraff', one of a generation of peasants and urban poor rising with the widening of education.

"Set in the years following the Egyptian Revolution of 1952, after political parties have been dissolved by decree, and as suspected members of the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood are being rounded up, jailed or executed, the novel hints at the forces feuding in Egyptian society, while illuminating the lives of those whose main goal is simply to survive.

"The translation is a brilliant exercise in the transfer of both literal meaning and nuance into the context of another language's culture – no mean feat."

**RUNNER-UP**

**Marilyn Booth**

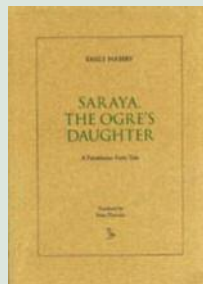


for *Thieves in Retirement* by Hamdi Abu Golayyel, published by Syracuse University Press (USA)

"A supple, subtle translation"

**COMMENDED**

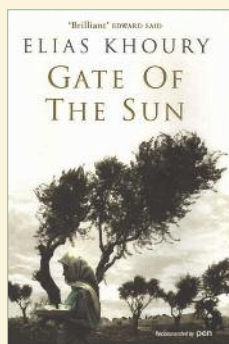
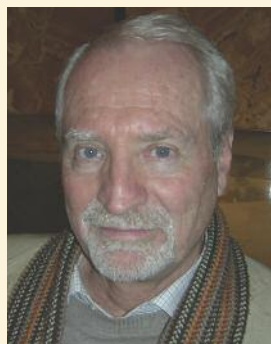
**Peter Theroux**



for *Saraya the Ogre's Daughter* by Emile Habibi, published by Ibis Editions (Israel)

**THE JUDGES:** Author **Moris Farhi**, literary journalist **Maya Jaggi**, professor and translator **Roger Allen**, and poet and Banipal trustee **Saadi Youssef** (Chair)

# 2006



## WINNER

### Humphrey Davies

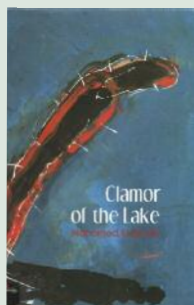
for *Gate of the Sun* by Elias Khoury,  
Harvill Secker (UK), Archipelago (US)

"Inspired by refugees' accounts of the Palestinian expulsion of 1948 and its lingering aftermath, Khoury's ambitious and richly crafted novel is an epic retelling of myriad individual stories through the central narrative of Khaleel, a doctor tending a comatose former Palestinian fighter in a refugee camp's makeshift hospital on the outskirts of Beirut. Tracing the meshed histories of Lebanon and Palestine from the 1930s to the 1990s, and the multiple crossings of a once-porous border with the state of Israel, it subtly questions the nature of memory and history, literature and imagination, heroism and defeat. The novel is a monumental achievement, whose translation by Humphrey Davies brilliantly captures the nuances and style of the original."

On being told of his award, Davies said: "Winning the Banipal Prize represents for me, primarily, recognition of the novel itself. *Gate of the Sun* is a work of extraordinary strength . . . I am doubly happy that, in translating it, I have helped to put before the reader of English so compelling an account of the dispossession of the Palestinians."

## RUNNER-UP

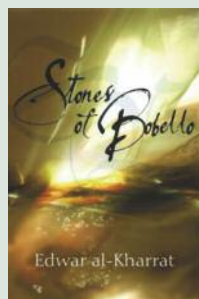
### Hala Halim



for  
***Clamour of the Lake***  
by Mohamed  
el-Bisatie,  
published by the  
American  
University in Cairo  
Press (AUC)

## COMMENDED

### Paul Starkey



for  
***Stones of Bobello***  
by  
Edwar El-Kharrat,  
published by  
Saqi Books (UK)

**THE JUDGES:** Author **Moris Farhi**, literary journalist **Maya Jaggi**, professor and translator **Roger Allen**, poet and Banipal trustee **Saadi Youssef** (Chair)

# In Memory of SAIF GHOBASH



The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation is wholly sponsored by Omar Saif Ghobash and his family in memory of his father, Saif Ghobash, who was passionate about the literature of the Arab world and the literatures of other countries. Saif Ghobash was a self-made man with a broad knowledge of culture and world affairs, “an international intellectual” as his friends called him. He loved the world of books, and had his own collection in many different languages, which his family inherited on his untimely death in 1977.

Saif Ghobash was born in 1932 in Ras Al Khaimah. When he was 12 his father died and just three months later he lost his mother. He moved to live with his aunt in Dubai for the next three years. In 1949, aged 17, he left his home country and began a journey, which was to last twenty years, in search of knowledge. First, he travelled to Bahrain to continue his studies and, in 1953, after graduating from The Eastern School in Manama, he travelled to Iraq to study engineering at the University of Baghdad. In 1956 he moved to Egypt after receiving a scholarship from the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Cairo. However, the College of Engineering in Cairo did not recognise his Baghdad studies, and so he travelled to Kuwait, where he worked as an assistant engineer in the Kuwaiti Public Works Department.

In 1959, Saif Ghobash left Kuwait for Austria, working in Graz and learning German. He then moved to Germany, working for a construction company in Düsseldorf, still determined to save enough to continue his studies. He worked also in Switzerland, from where he made frequent visits to Italy, and in 1963 travelled to Paris, working, learning French and studying literature and philosophy, before receiving a scholarship from the Soviet Union, enabling him, at last, to continue his studies at Leningrad University.

In 1969, after twenty years working and studying abroad, Saif Ghobash returned to his home town in Ras al-Khaimah. He began to work in the field of diplomacy and, on 25 December 1973, he became the First Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of the recently federated United Arab Emirates.

For all information about the prize, go to:

**[www.banipaltrust.org.uk](http://www.banipaltrust.org.uk)**

For all inquiries, email: [info@banipaltrust.org.uk](mailto:info@banipaltrust.org.uk)

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