

Circulating Translations in the 19th century from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea:
Texts in practice

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Description and Call for Papers

Translation and adaptation were vital to the dynamic cultural life and intellectual ferment of the 19th-century from the Eastern Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea, contributing to key debates on the shape of indigenous modern societies. The region's publishing hubs were the stage for translations and circulations of texts from western European languages into Middle Eastern languages and, within the Mediterranean /Middle Eastern region itself (and further to the east), works were translated from and amongst the region's languages, notably Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Greek, Hebrew, Armenian, and Karamanlidike. Indeed, many texts published first in Arabic were quickly translated into Turkish and Persian, while works produced in Europe might be translated near-simultaneously into Arabic, Turkish and Persian as well as Greek, Armenian, Hebrew, and other languages. The abundance of textual transmission, or publications, translations and circulations of texts between Europe and the Middle East and within eastern Europe/western Asia have been the subject of increasing scholarly interest. Such work has made it possible to think beyond aggregate spatial-historical description of the field of translation and commonly accepted geographical and linguistic frameworks, and to elucidate practices of translation and adaptation by working microcosmically on specific texts. We invite *pairs* of participants to focus on texts in translation in order to interrogate translational processes in this flexibly defined period and region.

This workshop, organised under the auspices of the Oriental Institute, University of Oxford, will bring together scholars of translation and intellectual history in the *nahda* period to work intensively on single texts or authors or translators, working between any relevant language pair (or trio, such as Arabic/Persian/French). This collaborative workshop follows a first workshop, held at the Centre for the Advanced Study of the Arab World, University of Edinburgh, December 2015, funded by the AHRC Language-Based Area Studies programme. At that workshop, twelve scholars, working in a range of languages and genres, considered not just the *what* but also the *how*, *for whom*, and *where* of the translations and linguistic contexts they study. Building on our discussions then, we want to address what we consider a relative lacuna in translation research on the region (as on other regions), by attending closely to translations' internal fabrics and the variety of possible translation-adaptation agendas that specific practices of translation expose. One insight of our first workshop was that in general in this period, 'adaptation' might be a more appropriate rubric than 'translation' to characterise the range of practices we were studying. But just what does 'adaptation' mean, and what are the consequences for the possible modes of reception of the text in its new linguistic and social space? In what specific ways does the text become something other than itself? And how, in addition, do new paratextual elements (such as a translator's preface) reshape it in its new home?

With this second workshop we take a further step by calling for pairs of scholars to engage in collaborative work to confront their selected text(s) mechanisms and strategies of translation, through a comparative and experimental practice, imagining themselves into the historically, contextually specific task of the translator. Our strategy in requesting collaborative work, in pairs of participants with different linguistic competencies is that this will make possible close reading

between host and reception languages. The first two workshop days will allow intensive collaborative work (with one discussion/plenary session each day; beginning on the afternoon of Day 2, each pair will give a half-hour presentation of their project followed by discussion. It is hoped that the workshop will yield a published volume or special issue of a scholarly journal.

Submissions for this workshop should encompass but move beyond historical and geographical contexts of translational movement to address the fabric of translation itself, allowing the text to define the relevant issues and approach (for example, a focus on key words and lexicographical issues, semantic fields, practices of summary, deletion and expansion, paratexts, etc.). We are open to work on any genre and any pair or trio of languages within the broad linguistic-regional compass noted above. Ideally we hope to remain in the 'long 19th century'. To give a few examples, pairs of participants might compare translations of works by Butrus al-Bustani, Qasim Amin, Shidyaaq, etc., into Persian and Turkish, or works by Aisha Taymur in their Persian, Turkish and Arabic versions, or translations of Fénelon's *Les aventures de Télémaque* into Arabic by Tahtawi, and into Turkish by Yusuf Kamil Pasha, and/or into Persian, Greek, Urdu or of European novels or plays into any of the pertinent languages.

Nota Bene: It would be expected that pairs will have already accomplished considerable work on the project before the workshop, to maximise the benefit of time allocated to working together during the workshop.

Submissions should include institutional information for both members of the research pair and a brief abstract (one half page) describing the project, including author(s), translator(s), text(s) and languages studied, and a rationale for the study, and must be received by 15 February 2017. Please email your abstract to both organisers:

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Dates: 20-22 September 2017 (3 full days)

Venue: Radcliffe Humanities Building, Seminar Room, University of Oxford

Deadlines:

Potential pairs of participants submit abstract: 15 February 2017

Organisers notify participants: 1-15 March 2017

Participants commit to attendance: 30 March 2017

Pairs of participants send final title, final abstract and brief bios: 30 May 2017

Pairs of participants send 2 pages summary of work accomplished thus far: 15 August 2017

Travel and accommodation:

Accommodation for four nights; three lunches and one dinner conference included.

Travel expenses will be reimbursed as far as possible although we will ask accepted participants to apply if possible for reimbursement from their home institutions. Those participating will be informed of how much we can reimburse before they make a final commitment to attend.