

TRANSLATION OF ARABIC LITERATURE IN DUTCH-SPEAKING COUNTRIES BETWEEN 2010 AND 2020

Arjwan al Fayle

Series editor **Alexandra Büchler**

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Series editor: Alexandra Büchler

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Translation of Arabic Literature in Dutch-Speaking Countries

2010 – 2020

Arjwan al Fayle

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About the author

Arjwan Al-Fayle studied Arabic language and culture at the University of Amsterdam. She started taking an interest in literary translation at the end of her studies and obtained a Master in Literary Translation from Utrecht University in 2017. She continues to work as a freelance translator and researcher in addition to fighting inequality of opportunity in the Dutch education system.

Contents

Introduction	5
Scope and methodology	5
Bibliographical data collection.....	5
Interviews	5
Desk research	6
1. Analysis of the bibliography	6
1.1. Translated authors	7
1.2. Translators.....	7
2.1 Publishers	8
2.2 Institutions and initiatives	10
El Hizra Foundation	10
PEN Vlaanderen	11
Writers Unlimited Foundation	11
Pages.....	11
Lagrange Points Brussels	12
Mousse.....	12
Schwob.....	13
Nadwa!.....	13
Dutch-Flemish Institute in Cairo	14
NIMAR.....	14
2.3 Festivals.....	14
2.4 Special events	16
3 Academia.....	17
3.1 University degrees.....	17
3.2 Research Master in Literary Translation	18
3.3 Summary of conversations	19
Arabic language and culture vs. MENA.....	20
Interest in literary translation – or lack of it	21
Academic network	21
4 Translators.....	22
4.1 Position of literary translators	22
4.2 Summary of conversations with translators	23
Position of Arabic literature	23
The translator of Arabic literature as agent.....	24
Support for literary translation from Arabic	24
5 Support for literary translators	24
5.1 Dutch Foundation for Literature	24
5.2 Flanders Literature	26
5.3 Centre of Expertise in Literary Translation.....	27
6 Conclusion and recommendations	28
Interplay contains a verb.....	28
The importance of a network	29
References.....	30

Annex I University degrees	31
Annex II Grants provided by the Dutch Foundation for Literature and Flanders Literature.....	32
Annex III Events mentioned in the study	34
Annex IV Bibliography of Arabic literary works translated into Dutch 2010 – 2020.....	37

Introduction

The aim of this study is to collect and analyse information on translation of Arabic literature into Dutch in the past decade and formulate conclusions and recommendations. It updates a report prepared ten years ago by the leading translator, academic and expert on Arabic literature, Dr Djûke Poppinga, as part of a mapping of translation flows in the Mediterranean. The study and its findings will complement research outcomes covering selected European target languages and will contribute to a collective effort to inform future initiatives aiming to build a European network of Arabic literature experts, support literary translators and encourage more translations.

Scope and methodology

As this research follows up on a previous study, the time scope covers the past decade from 2010 until 2020. The territory examined is the Netherlands and Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium. The research focuses on creative genres and includes novels, short stories, poetry collections and plays. The methodology consisted of desk research and data collection resulting in compilation of a bibliography of works translated into Dutch, as well as one-to-one interviews.

Bibliographical data collection

As there is no central database of translated literature in the Netherlands, the bibliography has been assembled by combing several sources.

- Annual reports by the Dutch Foundation for Literature: these give detailed information on translation grants
- Library databases (such as bibliotheek.nl and oba.nl)
- Author lists from publishing houses: the published works usually only go back so far, and may not cover the entire period.

Interviews

A total of eight key figures shared their insights and experiences on the topic of translated Arabic literature: literary translators, academics, and staff of institutions supporting literary

translation. While the interviews informed the study and its conclusions, not everyone gave permission to be quoted verbatim.

Desk research

The desk research aimed to provide an overview of relevant literary events, awards, organisations and institutions, most of which have their policies and mission statement publicly available online. As for training in Arabic and translation, a survey of BA and MA programmes has been conducted.

1. Analysis of the bibliography

The corpus of Arabic literature translated into Dutch consists of 34 literary titles. Two of the 34 titles were indirect translations from French: *Met Safaa komt de regen* by Ahmad Malik and *De Blauwe Pen* by Samar Yazbek.

This number is quite low, and this can be attributed partly to the fact that the Dutch readership of Arabic literature is small: with the exception of a few successful titles, translations from Arabic rarely get past a first print. If a certain language area or genre consistently has low sales, publishers will eventually focus their efforts on other books. However, limited sales are not the only reason for lack of interest on the part of publishers and other factors play a role.

In addition to translations of works written in Arabic, we should mention authors writing in English, French and German who originate from the Arabic-speaking region, and whose works have also been translated into Dutch and published between 2010 and 2021. They are:

- Boualem Sansal – an Algerian author who writes in French
- Yasmina Khadra – the pseudonym of Algerian writer Mohammed Moulessehoul who writes in French
- Sherko Fatah – an Iraqi-Kurdish writer who grew up in the DDR and writes in German
- Nayrouz Qarmout – a Palestinian author born in Syria who writes in English
- Riad Sattouf – a Syrian-born graphic novelist who created the five part series *The Arab of the Future* in French

1.1. Translated authors

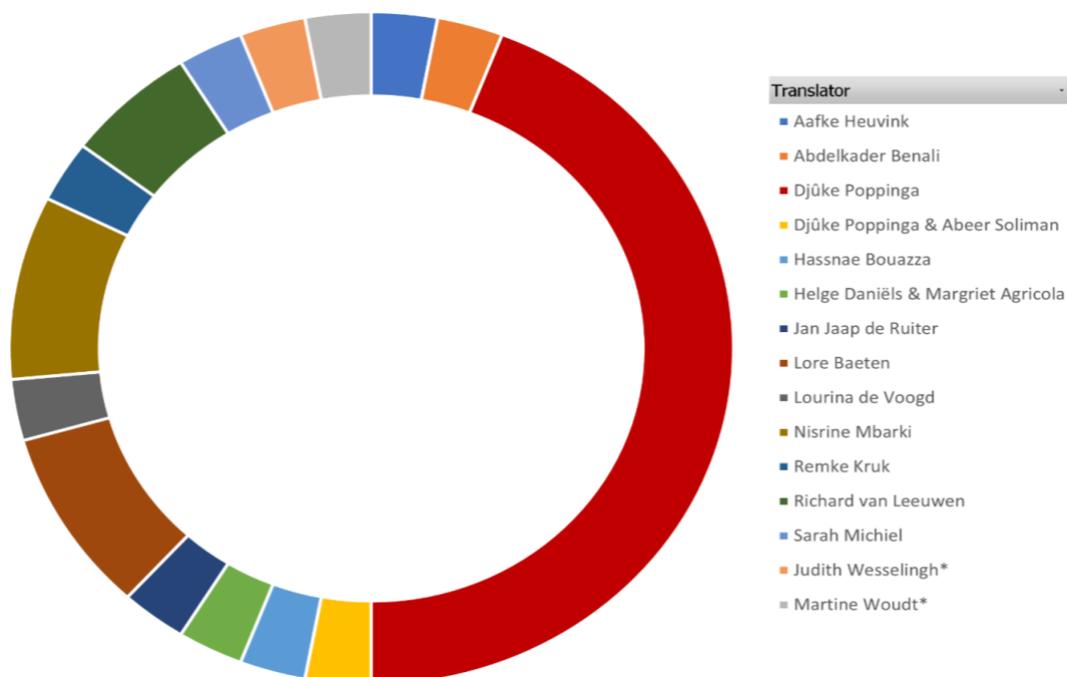
The past decade saw a very diverse group of translated authors in addition to well-known names, such as Naguib Mahfouz, Nawal Sa’dawi and Hanan al-Shaykh.¹ The following top 4 had more than one translated title to their name.

<i>Writers</i>	No. of Titles
<i>Khaled Khalifa</i>	3
<i>Mohammed Choukri</i>	2
<i>Naguib Mahfouz</i>	2
<i>Hassan Blasim</i>	2

The rest of the list consists of authors who have one title translated in Dutch. A slight majority are from Syria. There are a few titles that were originally published over 20 years ago, but the majority of the list consists of recent works.

1.2. Translators

Figure 1 Distribution by translator



¹ Fayle, Arjwan al. *Ḥanān aš-šaiḥ Een vertaalkritisch onderzoek naar de framing van haar literair werk in Nederland*, RMA thesis, Utrecht University, pp. 26-30, 15 August 2017.

Almost half of literary translations from Arabic published in the past decade are by Djûke Poppinga, author of the previous study on translation from Arabic into Dutch. Poppinga teaches Arabic language and literature at the University of Amsterdam, is involved in the organisation of several literary events and has been on the assessment committee of the Dutch Foundation for Literature. She started translating Arabic literature in the 1980's and hasn't stopped since. Because of her impressive record, she is the first name that will come up when looking for an expert on Arabic literature or translating from Arabic.

Sharing second place are Nisrine Mbarki and Lore Baeten. A poet herself, Mbarki focuses almost exclusively on translating poetry with the exception of her 2021 translation of a play for the publishing house Bebuquin.

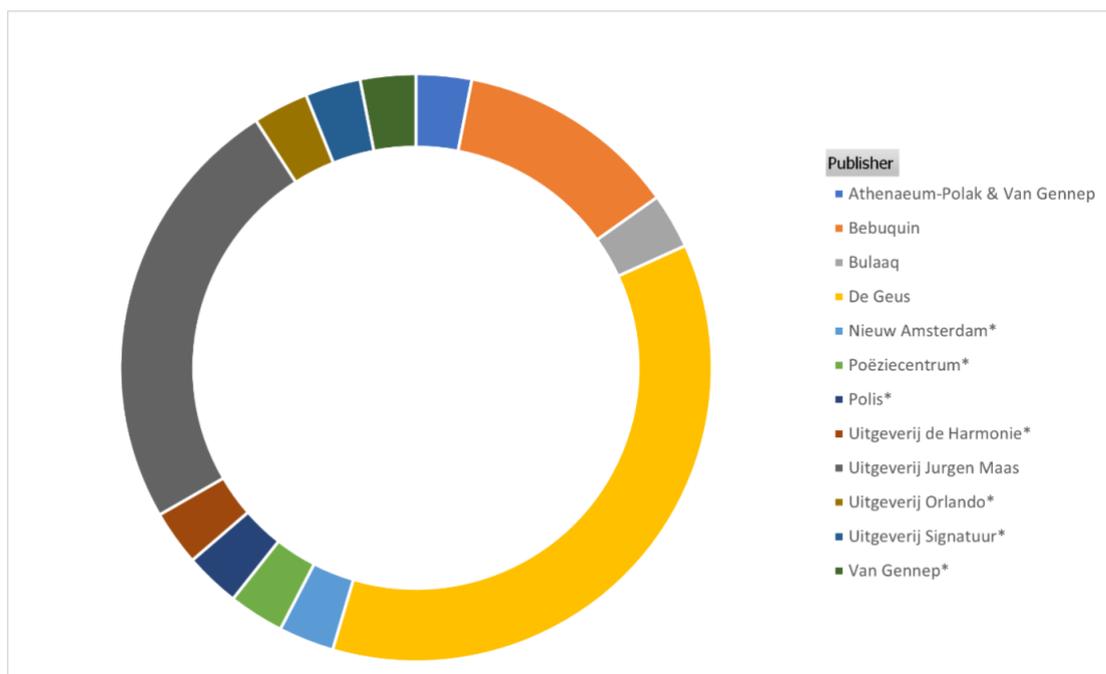
Lore Baeten, who teaches Arabic at the KU Leuven, specialises in translating plays for Bebuquin, with the exception of her 2021 translation of a poetry collection by Hosheng Ossi.

2. Literary landscape – dissemination and reception

2.1 Publishers

Considering translated works by Arab authors as a whole, including those who write in German, English or French, the following picture emerges:

Figure 2 Distribution of published translations 2010-2021



The figure above shows the distribution of published translations between different publishers. The publishers marked with an asterisk have one single translation published in the period in question.

Three publishers are responsible for a third of the listed publications: De Geus (12), Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas (9) and Bebuquin(4).

De Geus – or Uitgeverij de Geus, as it was previously known – has been through a transformation in the past decade. The small independent publisher was established in 1983 in Breda, far from the Amsterdam literary scene, but in 2016 was bought by Singel Uitgeverijen and moved to Amsterdam.² As of 2021 Singel Uitgeverijen is a collective of nine publishers, including Athenaeum, another publisher listed above, each with their own target audience and market. De Geus traditionally focuses on translated literature and has continued to do so.³

The founder of Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas has been working in journalism since 1997 as a reporter, presenter and editor-in-chief at IKON, one of the smaller Dutch public broadcasters⁴ characterised by left-wing Christian values. It hailed from a time when the Netherlands relied heavily on pillarization⁵ of society. By the end of 2012, the Dutch government announced cuts to public financing of small, faith-based broadcasters.⁶ This left them at the mercy of bigger public broadcasters, but Maas made a bold move and in 2013 started his own publishing house, which focuses mainly on works from or about the MENA region, as well as on issues of multiculturalism in the Netherlands.

The third press, Bebuquin, publishes theatre plays. The readership in the Netherlands isn't used to reading plays which are seen as a script serving to stage theatre productions.

² <https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/de-geus-gaat-onderdeel-uitmaken-van-singel-uitgeverijen~b7a60f76/>

³ De Geus traditionally publishes around 70% translated works, opposed to Singel responsible for around 30%, according to managing director Paulien Loerts: <https://lmbooks.be/de-geus-gaat-onderdeel-uitmaken-van-singel-uitgeverijen-in-amsterdam/>

⁴ <https://tvenradiodb.nl/index.php/16/ikon.html>

⁵ Since mid-19th century Dutch society has had a pillarized (*verzuild*) structure, where political parties, trade unions, schools, newspapers, broadcasting networks and even sports and social clubs belonged to a religious denomination. Steiniger, R. 'Pillarization (verzuiling) and Political Parties', in: *Sociologische Gids*, 1977, Vol.24-4, pp. 249-250.

⁶ <https://www.government.nl/topics/the-media-and-broadcasting/media-act-rules-for-broadcasters-and-programming>

Incidentally, in some countries in the MENA region, it's quite common to read plays, as not everyone enjoys the freedom or has the means to go to the theatre.

Bebuquin is a Flemish publisher and it's worth noting here that the Dutch Literature Foundation doesn't support the publication of plays, as this is the remit of the *Fonds Podiumkunsten* (Performing Arts Fund), where playwrights can apply specifically for theatre text grants. Flanders Literature on the other hand has awarded a grant for *Dagboek van een leeg bed*, published by Bebuquin.

2.2 Institutions and initiatives

When looking at the section of the literary landscape of the Netherlands and Flanders that includes translated literature as well as Dutch writing by authors who are not of Dutch origin, the part related to Arabic literature appears small and neglected. But, at a closer look, there are several organisations working on promoting Arabic prose and poetry. The following is a concise overview of institutions past and present that have ties to Arabic literature. The first seven are characterised by their literary and cultural focus, whilst the latter three have strong academic ties.

El Hizra Foundation

El Hizra was established in 1987 to create a cultural bridge for Arab migrants to the Netherlands. Every year it awards the *El Hizra Literatuurprijs* (Literary Prize) to emerging talent. El Hizra describes the awards in its mission statement as a 'place where Dutch people with Arabic roots can meet others with an interest in Arabic literature, arts, culture', offering young literary talent a stage and an audience, and facilitates writing workshops and literary-cultural events 'to contribute to an inclusive society where everyone has a place and participation comes naturally.' Some of the previous prize-winners have had a productive literary career.

PEN Vlaanderen

PEN Vlaanderen is part of PEN International – the organisation that ‘stands up for and protects authors [...] who are threatened, persecuted, imprisoned or tried for what they have written’.⁷ PEN International and the country centres organise events worldwide and campaign to protect writers and their ability to speak freely. PEN Vlaanderen currently supports 12 writers and links them to Flemish authors. Eleven of them now reside in Belgium’, while the twelfth is the well-known imprisoned Turkish dissident Ahmet Altan. In 2016, Uitgeverij P published a collection of prose and poetry,⁸ as a result of the PEN project. Eight of the twelve writers current adopted by PEN are from the MENA region.⁹ Another important initiative of PEN Vlaanderen is the PEN apartment¹⁰ that temporarily houses authors from countries where there is too much civil unrest for them to continue their work.

Writers Unlimited Foundation

The Writers Unlimited Foundation focuses on ‘giving writers, poets, artists and thinkers a platform to engage with their audience about literature, art, science and society.’¹¹ Originally the foundation and festival focused mainly on writers from the Netherlands, Indonesia, Surinam and the Antilles¹², but have now expanded their reach to writers and artists of non-Western background with a link to the Netherlands.¹³

Pages

In June 2017, the Syrian-born painter and graphic designer Samer al-Kadri opened Pages Bookstore Café in Amsterdam – a bookshop carrying Arabic and Turkish books, and later also book sin Dutch and English. Having left Syria with his wife, the children’s book writer and illustrator Gulnar Hajo, he had previously opened a Pages Bookstore Café in Istanbul. He hoped that by opening an Arabic language bookstore in the Netherlands, he would contribute

⁷ <https://penvlaanderen.be/missie/>

⁸ *Aan de andere oever van het verlangen*, Uitgeverij P/PEN Vlaanderen, 2016.

⁹ Alhadi Agabeldour, Nisma al Aklouk, Fatena al Ghorra, Hazim Kamaledin, Abdullah Maksour, Majid Matrood, Hosheng Ossi and Ahmad Katlesh. A few of them also have works translated into Dutch.

¹⁰ <https://penvlaanderen.be/pen-flat/>

¹¹ Source: <https://www.writersunlimited.nl/pagina/anbi-informatie>

¹² These are countries with colonial links to the Netherlands. Source: <https://www.writersunlimited.nl/pagina/over-writers-unlimited>

¹³ Countries linked to the Netherlands through immigration are mainly Turkey and Morocco (economic migrants), while in recent years the country has received refugees from Syria and Eritrea.

to defying the stereotype that migrants from the MENA region are by definition from a ‘lower’ or uneducated class.¹⁴ The bookshop was initially housed in the gallery of the Prins Claus Foundation on the prestigious Herengracht in Amsterdam for five months.¹⁵ After that Pages would have to find a more permanent home. That same year in November it moved to the Goethe Institute in Amsterdam, and in April 2018 to the Goethe Institute in Rotterdam¹⁶ until the end of the year. After that, due to lack of support, al-Kadri was forced to close the Pages Bookstore in the Netherlands.

However, it is still possible to order books from their website, and in September 2021 Pages will launch a new festival of Arab culture, Reorient.

Lagrange Points Brussels

Lagrange Points, a bookstore and cultural centre in Brussels focused on giving a stage to Arabic literature and culture, whilst interconnecting with this immensely diverse city, opened in April 2018. The founders of Lagrange were initially in close contact with Samer al-Kadri, the driving force behind Pages, hoping to open a Brussels branch of the Pages Bookstore, however al-Kadri advised against it, suggesting that the new bookstore should have its own concept and identity.¹⁷ This turned out to be a successful move, and to this day Lagrange Points organises talks, meeting and events at their own base or at other venues in Brussels.

Moussem

Moussem started out in 2001 as a small intercultural festival in Antwerp, created by a group of Moroccans, but became a Brussels-based cultural centre introducing artists from the MENA region. The organisation is now moving away from the MENA focus and wants to open up more to facilitate intercultural and international dialogue ‘that uses the various diasporas [of the city] as a starting point for that exchange’.¹⁸ Moussem supports and collaborates with Bebuquin for their theatre repertoire called *Moussem Repertoire*. They offer residencies to

¹⁴ Source: conversation with Helge Daniëls (who knows al-Kadri personally). Note that she was careful to use the term *lower class*

¹⁵ <https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/syrier-opent-boekhandel-in-amsterdam-om-bruggen-te-bouwen~bd8b7602/>

¹⁶ https://www.goethe.de/ins/nl/nl/sta/rot/ver.cfm?fuseaction=events.detail&event_id=21264103

¹⁷ Source: conversation with Helge Daniëls.

¹⁸ <https://www.moussem.be/nl/over-moussem>

playwrights, dancers and creators, whilst still maintaining their intention to support local artists from the MENA region.

Schwob

Schwob is an initiative of the Dutch Foundation for Literature with a focus on 'forgotten classics'. They cooperate with a large group of publishers and bookshops, every year selecting 20 titles that deserve attention. Some titles in the selection are eventually published, and writers from the MENA region include Tahar Djaout, Albert Cossery, Mohammed Mbrabet and Mohammed Choukri.

Nadwa!

The *Amsterdam Centre for Middle East Studies* (ACMES) is a University of Amsterdam organisation aiming to stimulate interdisciplinary research within the university and cooperate with several partners outside academia, such as the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the International Prize for Arabic Fiction.

The literary *Nadwa!* is an initiative launched by ACMES in 2013. On the day of the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) award ceremony, a small group of academics came together to discuss the six shortlisted titles. Robbert Woltering, professor at the UvA and director of ACMES, led the panel discussion. Since its first edition in 2013, ACMES continued to organise the *Nadwa!* annually alongside IPAF with some editions being bigger than others. In 2016 the *Nadwa!* was organised in Spui25 and was for the first time opened to an audience, including the publisher Jurgen Maas.¹⁹ In 2018 the *Nadwa!* was held at Pages in the Goethe Institute Amsterdam and again attracted a significant audience, and resulted in an article on that year's winner Ibrahim Nasrallah, discussing the IPAF award in the context of questions raised about funding from Abu Dhabi, causing some controversy.²⁰ Another edition followed in the Goethe Institute in 2019, and an online one in 2020.

¹⁹ In conversation with Lucia Admiraal she mentioned that this edition made her think to open up the annual event more.

²⁰ Zeeuw, Huib de. 'Nasrallah wint prijs voor Arabische literatuur – ongeloof in Amsterdam', *NRC*, 25 April 2018. <https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/04/25/nasrallah-wint-prijs-voor-arabische-literatuur-ongeloof-in-amsterdam-a1600772>

Dutch-Flemish Institute in Cairo

The *Nederlands-Vlaams Instituut in Cairo* (NVIC – Dutch-Flemish Institute in Cairo) is an academic centre, with different Dutch and Flemish universities collaborating to provide support for students of Arabic language or Middle East studies. The centre is supported by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences. The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs has also invested in strengthening the ties between Egypt and the Netherlands, to gain strategic access to the MENA region. Projects have a focus of intercultural exchange through art and academics to promote diplomacy and soft power relations. One exemplary initiative is the Facebook page Colours of Holland.

NIMAR

The *Nederlands Instituut Marokko* or Netherlands Institute Morocco has a similar mission as the NVIC, but whereas the NVIC is a collaboration between a group of tertiary institutions managed by Leiden University, the NIMAR is solely a Leiden University initiative and also funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It offers various courses and supports research, whilst it also strengthens diplomatic ties between Morocco and the Netherlands.

2.3 Festivals

There are numerous festivals focusing solely on literature or with literature strongly embedded within its programming in both the Netherlands and Flanders.

Nacht van de Arabische literatuur (Night of Arabic Literature) is an annual festival with a focus on Arabic literature or authors from the MENA region, but presents itself as cultural festival in their promotion statements.²¹ The *Nacht van de Arabische literatuur* usually has several presentations, talks, movies and a *cultural souk*²², but mainly revolves around the award ceremony of the *El Hizjra Literatuurprijs* (El Hizjra Literary Prize). The festival is created by El Hizjra and saw its first edition in 2016. From there it had four editions in total with the last one in November 2019, all organised in Amsterdam – the hometown of El Hizjra as well. There

²¹ E.g. flyers and posters

²² Food, cosmetics, books, fashion

was no edition in 2020 presumably because of local Covid-19 measures, however there is no reporting on a 2020 edition to have taken place nor being cancelled.

Winternachten is another annual festival, organised since 1995 in The Hague by the Writers Unlimited foundation. Since 2011, the festival has incorporated the *PEN Award for Freedom of Expression*.^{23, 24} *Winternachten* invites writers from around the world and have included writers and poets that write in Arabic such as Adonis, Hassan Blasim, Samar Yazbek, Amin Maalouf, Hanan al-Shaykh, but also writers from the MENA region that write in Dutch, English or French, like Sayed Kashua, Abdelkader Benali and Hassnae Bouazza.

In 2013 a new annual literary festival based in Amsterdam emerged called *Read My World*. Every edition of this festival is themed by a specific area in the world, which can usually be linked to specific local or international social issues. In 2017 the theme was Black USA, clearly linked to the Black Lives Matter movement and bringing the female Black voice to the forefront, while in 2018 Turkey was in focus with the failed coup d'état of 2016 still vividly imprinted in everyone's mind.

The first edition was themed *Arabic literature*,²⁵ which in itself seems like a careful consideration not to exclude or include any specific countries and answer to the protests and events that have been collectivised as the Arab Spring. Festival curators Asmaa Azaizeh and Abeer Soliman presented a diverse programme of prose, poetry, film, workshops and stand-up comedy. Their main objective was to have stories from the Arab world heard and have achieved that goal by inviting writers and artists that hail from the MENA region, but also from the Netherlands.

Another edition of *Read My World* worth mentioning is their 2019 theme *Morocco*, highlighting the strong link between the two countries.²⁶

The Hague is home to another festival that has its gaze set outward, which is *Crossing Border*, the longest running event listed in this overview with its first edition taking place in 1992, focusing on literature and music. Although there are no specific ties to Arabic literature, their

²³ <https://pen-international.org/celebrating-literature/pen-awards>

²⁴ <https://www.writersunlimited.nl/nieuwsbericht/oxfam-novib-pen-award-for-freedom-of-expression>

²⁵ <https://www.readmyworld.nl/arabische-literatuur-2013/>

²⁶ In May of 1969 a recruitment agreement was signed between the Netherlands and Morocco to recruit young Moroccan men for specific jobs that could not be filled by Dutch people due to the economic boom.

fringe project – *The Chronicles*, connecting young authors to young translators – is worth mentioning as it will be discussed in 2.4.

Last but not least, one has to mention the annual *Poetry International Festival Rotterdam* which celebrated its 50th edition take place in June 2020. The festival invites poets from around the world to perform on several different stages throughout the city. Some editions of the festival have one or more poets from the MENA region, whilst other editions have none.

A special mention is due to the *Kalima Fiesta* festival, that would have seen its first edition between March 19th and 21st of 2020 in several places in Brussels, but unfortunately had to be cancelled because of Covid-measures. The festival focused on Arabic poetry and on connecting Dutch, Arabic and French-speaking poets.

2.4 Special events

As mentioned in 2.3 the *El Hizra Literatuurprijs* (Literary Award) has been at the centre of the *Nacht van de Arabische literatuur* since the beginning of the festival in 2016. Before 2016 (and in 2020) the award ceremony was a standalone event. The El Hizra Literatuurprijs has been awarded 27 times.

The Chronicles is a fringe project organised by *Crossing Border* festival aiming to connect young writers to young translators from all over the world. The setup of this project is that the author, who is presenting his or her work at the festival, writes blogs each day of the festival. This blog is published on the website and in the festival paper, and the interpretation of a 'blog post' is completely free. All the authors send their blogs at a certain time, which prompts the translators to start working on their translation and hand it in around 5 hours later. During the festival young translators have the opportunity to share the stage with their paired author and talk about the texts. This gives an interesting dimension to the festival and adds a networking function, as all the participants stay in the same festival hotel. After the festival there is time to fine-tune the translations together with a mentor. This fringe project is usually supported by the Dutch Foundation for Literature and the Master's programme for Literary Translation. The 2012 and 2019 editions included authors writing in Arabic and translated into Dutch.

3 Academia

For a Dutch or Flemish student with an interest in Arabic language, culture or Islam, there are a few universities that offer Arabic language courses. In this chapter, we'll discuss several routes to a degree in Arabic at Dutch-language universities.

3.1 University degrees

Table 1 Overview of academic programmes²⁷

<i>Programme</i>	Type	University
<i>Arabische taal en cultuur (Arabic language and culture)</i>	BA	University of Amsterdam
<i>Islam en Arabisch (Islam and Arabic)</i>	BA	University of Utrecht
<i>Midden-Oostenstudies (Middle East studies)</i>	BA	University of Groningen
<i>Islamstudies (Islam studies)</i>	BA	Radboud University
<i>Midden-Oostenstudies (Middle East studies)</i>	BA	University of Leiden
<i>Language and regional Studies: Arabic and Islamic Studies</i>	BA	KU Leuven
<i>Applied linguistics (Arabic as a second foreign language)</i>	BA	KU Leuven (Antwerp campus)
<i>Vertalen (Translation)</i>	MA	University of Amsterdam
<i>Vertalen (Translation)</i>	MA	KU Leuven (Antwerp campus)
<i>Literair vertalen (Literary Translation) until 2018</i>	RMA	University of Utrecht & KU Leuven

The table above has all the options an aspiring student of Arabic can choose from: 7 bachelor programmes and 2 master programmes, specifically on translation. Master programmes focusing on Middle East studies or Islam have been deliberately left out, due to the scope of and relevance to this research.

What immediately stands out is the difference in focus of the universities. The BA offered in Amsterdam is distinct in that it's the only programme focusing on language and culture. It is also the only programme in the Netherlands that offers multiple courses on literary texts, both modern and classical, as well as comparative literature courses. It is also the only programme that flips the language acquisition: instead of immediately focusing on the

²⁷ The data file offers more detail on the programmes.

alphabet and grammar, which can be especially hard on first year students, they teach how to speak colloquial Egyptian first and focus on MSA²⁸ later.

Both Groningen and Leiden offer a BA programme that mainly covers socio-political analysis of the MENA region, which is also reflected in the course guide as reading Arabic limits itself to either Qur'anic texts or news articles. The University of Leiden also offers colloquial Arabic language acquisition, but only in the second year after a first of MSA.

The BA programmes offered at KU Leuven are very different and it's worth noting that no Arabic linguistic track is available at a university in the Netherlands.

The BA offered at Radboud University is the only one that's not part of the humanities, as it belongs to the faculty of theology.

Both the University of Amsterdam and KU Leuven offer a one-year translation MA programme with a mix of theory and translation workshops in various languages and Arabic included.

3.2 Research Master in Literary Translation

Utrecht University offered a transnational research master programme focusing on literary translation. This programme was two years, 120ECTS and incorporated translation practice, theory as well as research. The students enrolled were BA graduates of different languages, such as English, French, Spanish, German, Arabic, Swedish but also one Hungarian student translating Dutch to Hungarian.

The research master was the product of collaboration starting in 2008 between the Dutch Foundation for Literature, Flanders Literature, Centre for Expertise of Literary Translation and Nederlandse Taalunie (trans. language union). Collectively they published a sixty-page plea on preserving translation culture called **Overigens schitterend vertaald* (trans. Brilliantly translated, by the way), which was presented at the PETRA-E congress in 2011. It mapped out the state of literary translation, made recommendations based on the analysis and moreover developed a learning line with clear definitions and objectives that could be used in literary translation education across Europe. The PETRA-E network is a European network aimed at

²⁸ Modern Standard Arabic

the education of literary translators, by collaborating intensively, sharing methods and tools, as well as exchanging teachers and students.²⁹

2013 saw the first year of the Literary Translation programme by Utrecht University and KU Leuven and its partners. Students had freedom to explore, but with the right guidance. The RMA Literary Translation existed alongside a regular, one-year MA Translation, but the RMA was not only focused on literature and research, but was also aimed at shaking up the old guard of literary translators and providing a new influx of young translators. Prof. Ton Naaijken, who has been at the head of the collaboration over the years and subsequently became the RMA coordinator, never hid his opinion that the old guard should teach the new generation of literary translators and also make way for them: don't stand in the doorway, but make the pie bigger, by translating more.³⁰

The years 2016 and 2017 were however spent proving the RMA's right to exist to the Commissie Doelmatigheid Hoger Onderwijs (trans. Higher Education Efficiency Commission). The CDHO advises the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on efficiency of government-funded higher education. The CDHO deemed it unnecessary for the RMA to exist next to the MA, as the professional prospect of students and expected number of literary translations were not in balance. It came down to keeping the MA programme but giving up the RMA track as the CDHO saw no benefit to offering the two tracks next to each other.³¹

As of 2016 Utrecht University had to stop the intake of new RMA students and was forced to terminate the RMA Literary Translation definitively on August 31st 2018.

3.3 Summary of conversations

For this research conversations have been held with Helge Daniëls (KU Leuven), Djûke Poppinga (University of Amsterdam), Ellen van de Bovenkamp (Utrecht University) and Lucia Admiraal (University of Amsterdam). They all conduct or have conducted academic research in different fields, teach Arabic language courses and have ties with the literary world. Djûke Poppinga is a leading literary translator of Arabic works in the Netherlands. Helge Daniëls has some translations to her name and has an immense knowledge of Arabic literature, modern

²⁹ <https://petra-education.eu/about-petra-e/>

³⁰ 'Het vertaaljaar 2013', *Filter*, 21-1, 2014, p.3-15

³¹ Decisions numbered '2016/68' and '2017/96/vgm' to be found on <https://www.cdho.nl/>

and classical. Ellen van de Bovenkamp teaches Arabic language and is an avid reader of Arabic literature, but the only one that, interestingly enough, has studied French but not Arabic, which she has acquired while working in Morocco for years as a journalist and translator, Lucia Admiraal is just completing her PhD at ARTES and is on the steering committee of the aforementioned ACMES.

The main objective of the conversations was to identify any trends within universities when it comes to Arabic language acquisition. All the interviewees were asked the same three questions:

- 1) What is the current state of university programmes teaching Arabic language and specifically literature?
- 2) Is there interest in the Arabic language overall? And if yes, is there specific interest in literature? Does the university stimulate that or are language departments more restricted?
- 3) Do you experience interest regarding literary translation amongst the influx of new students?

Answering these questions led to more interesting findings, and a few themes emerged around which the conversations could be summarised.³²

Arabic language and culture vs. MENA

As we have seen in the overview of university programmes, the academic approaches to the Arabic language range from linguistic to literary, or as means to achieving a greater socio-political insight into the MENA region. This difference of approach is also evident in how Arabic courses are seen by students of the interviewees. The majority study Arabic as a means to understanding the region or are students from other programmes (i.e., Law, Political Science, History) who opt for Arabic language acquisition as a minor subject. Others are linguists with a real passion for language or those who study Arabic as native first-generation speakers or heritage speakers with family ties to the MENA region. However, the majority of

³² The themed structure of the conversation reports allows general comments and trends to be mentioned, as not all participants gave permission to be quoted verbatim.

interviewees agreed that the aims and motivations of students who enrol to study Arabic are not easy to categorise.

Even those who express an interest in literature might be more interested in politically engaged works in order to understand more about the region. It should be noted that all have pointed out the major differences between BA and MA students. They recognise that BA students have to invest a lot of time and effort in learning the new language, with its different script and complex grammar, before being able to pick up a book and start reading.

KU Leuven has only recently changed its programme to regional studies, but the actual content of the courses and what is discussed is still up to the professors and lecturers. If students show an interest in a specific area, the teaching staff can facilitate that by offering their expertise and encouragement.

Interest in literary translation – or lack of it

There is consensus that few students learn Arabic in order to read literature, and while some will show interest in translating, most will not pursue translation as a career, be it literary or in other fields. The main argument is that it doesn't pay well and that they're not at a level where they would feel confident to translate.

Interestingly, the landscape of literary translation in Dutch-speaking countries is diverse, and it is certainly not a given that academic study of Arabic is a prerequisite to translating Arabic literature, while an interest in literature and translation doesn't always lead to an academic career.³³

Academic network

The respondents were well informed about the programmes, courses or focus of other universities, and the differences between their own BA and MA programmes and those of other institutions. However, there is no structured cooperation between the academic institutes dedicated to Arabic language or literature. Inter-university cooperation could come in the form of a research school – such as the schools dedicated to research in the humanities,

³³ Translators such as Hassnae Bouazza, who studies English language and culture, and Nisrine Mbarki, a graduate of higher theater education.

literature, cultural analysis or gender studies. Lack of time may be the reason, as the faculties have small teams whose workload tends to be heavy. Lack of funding can also be a major hurdle, as language faculties have seen their programmes drastically restructured or reduced.

34

4 Translators

Though complete and accurate data on the number of translated books in Dutch³⁵ is hard to come by, the platform KVB Boekwerk³⁶ is a good source to for a rough estimate. The organisation collects data on book sales and publications with the aim of providing information to the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, as well as proposing innovations³⁷ and promoting readership.

Between 2013 and 2017 the number of original Dutch titles – not just literary – is around 6,800 per year. The number of translated titles in Dutch in the same period fluctuates between 3,600 and 4,000, which comes down to an average of 35% of books published in the Netherlands being translations.

4.1 Position of literary translators

In the Netherlands collective negotiations have resulted in agreements concerning translation rates and contracts.³⁸ Literary translators can download the model contract drawn up by the Auteursbond – the union for authors – in cooperation with publishers organisations. It gives literary translators a decent framework and checklist to approach publishers with and establishes a legal relationship between publisher and translator. The model contract is also a requirement for translators who wish to apply for a grant to the Dutch Foundation for Literature. There is no model contract under Belgian law, but the Dutch one can still be used by literary translators working for Flemish publishers.

There are also agreements on minimum rates regarding prose and poetry. The minimum per word is set at € 0,068. The minimum per line of poetry is set at € 2,49 with a minimum of €

³⁴ Gelder, Lorianne van. 'Geesteswetenschappen gaat kleine taalstudies toch schrappen', *Het Parool*, 4 February 2015. <https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/geesteswetenschappen-gaat-kleine-taalstudies-toch-schrappen~b479fdbc/>

³⁵ In the scope of 2010-2020

³⁶ <https://kvbboekwerk.nl/over-ons>

³⁷ These innovations are mainly focused on making the distribution infrastructure in the book market more efficient.

³⁸ <https://literairvertalen.org/kennisbank/veelgestelde-vragen-contracten-financien-en-vertaalrechten>

43,68 per poem. It has to be said that other agreements can always be made between a publisher and translator: an emerging literary translator might agree to a lower, more competitive rate, while an experienced translator with a unique language combination might be able to negotiate a better remuneration.³⁹

4.2 Summary of conversations with translators

Three translators, each with a different experience, number of titles, specialisms and career path, have been interviewed for this chapter. They are Djûke Poppinga, Nisrine Mbarki and Helge Daniëls and their comments are summarised rather than presented individually.

All have been asked the same four questions:

- 1) In your experience what is the level of attention Arabic literature receives today? Would you say it is more or less than 10-15 years ago?
- 2) Are you as a literary translator also a literary agent for Arabic literature? Or do publishers contact you with titles that they want to translate?
- 3) What's your experience with support from funds and subsidies for literary translators?
- 4) Have there been improvements in support for literary translators from Arabic in your view?

Position of Arabic literature

The attention Arabic literature receives is minimal in Dutch-speaking countries compared to literature translated from other languages or original Dutch works. One translator noted that in the 1980s and 1990s there was more media attention in the form of book reviews in quality newspapers, but since then reviews have dwindled and reviewers tend to focus more on Dutch writers. Another felt that the opposite was the case, and that there is an increasing interest in Arabic literature, due to more people arriving in Europe from the MENA region.

However, they all agree that significant social or political events lead to a spike in interest.

³⁹ My own anecdotal experience whilst enrolled in the RMA Literary Translation is that this was a very sensitive topic: fellow students would always know someone who offered their work for a fraction of their own rate. It sparked many fruitful discussions on exposure versus fair pay and collective responsibility.

The translator of Arabic literature as agent

The experiences of the three interviewed translators differ: one feels the need to 'sell' certain titles to publishers, while another says she has never had to 'pitch' titles to publishers. There are cases where the fact that a work has been translated into English is a sufficient reason for a publisher to acquire the rights to Dutch translation. One translator even recalls an instance where a work was translated via English rather than directly from Arabic, but she managed to recover what was left out when retranslating from Arabic.

The translators sometimes had to defend their strategies and choices while working with editors who do not read Arabic but who compared it to an English translation. A shared conclusion is that there is too little variety and that there are many literary gems in Arabic that may never be translated into any language.

Support for literary translation from Arabic

The experience regarding support also varies, as some translations have been directly commissioned and paid for by publishers without the need to rely on Dutch or Flemish literary funds. In either case, Arabic literature is still a niche area on the Dutch literary scene.

5 Support for literary translators

Both in the Netherlands and in Flanders there are literary funds in place that promote literature as a whole and provide support for writers as well as literary translators, not only in terms of financial support but also in the form of workshops, networking opportunities and cooperation with other organisations that contribute to the development of literature.

For this part of the research, the three key organisations were interviewed to find out more about their experience of the position of Arabic literature and its translation into Dutch, supported by data found in annual reports.

5.1 Dutch Foundation for Literature

The Dutch Foundation for Literature has a broad interest in promoting many different facets of literary creation and production at home, as well as putting Dutch literature on the world

map through organisation of events abroad and support for translation of Dutch titles into other languages. Their mission is described as follows:

The Dutch Foundation for Literature has the task of supporting writers and translators, and of promoting Dutch literature abroad. It invests in the quality and diversity of literature through grants for writers, translators, publishers and festivals, and contributes to the production and distribution of Dutch and Frisian literature at home and abroad. With the support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, it aims to promote a thriving literary climate, embedded in literary history and attuned to the latest developments in the publishing industry.

The Dutch Foundation for Literature provides translation grants into Dutch directly paid to translators and has awarded one or two grants per year for translation from Arabic quite consistently up until 2018. There have been a handful of rejected applications due to the inadequate quality of the supplied translated samples assessed by external readers. The Foundation also supports a mentorship programme, where emerging literary translators can apply for funding to pay their mentor whilst translating a work intended for publication.

In the years 2010-2017, the Foundation has also supported projects to boost interest in Arabic literature in the Netherlands and further professionalise the field of Arabic-Dutch literary translation. Even though there has been interest in these mentoring and intensive translation projects, they haven't particularly increased the numbers of active translators of Arabic literature. This is very likely due to low demand which is readily met by the existing group of established translators. As it has been pointed out elsewhere, Arabic literature has limited readership and most books by Arab authors don't get past first print. This dynamic has a direct impact on the number of translators who apply for a translation grant, because of the requirement that their project has to have a demonstrated commitment from a publisher to publish the work.

The Foundation has a small team that focuses solely on support for translation, whose work is divided into several language areas. For example, there is one employee working solely on funding for literary translations from English. If we look at the position of Arabic literature within the organisation, it's combined in one employee's language portfolio together with

literary translations from French and Italian, as well as Slavic and other languages – where Arabic is placed in the latter category.

An interesting pivot in the policy of the Dutch Foundation for Literature took place in 2013, when after 12 years of having a stated intercultural policy – which meant that the Foundation participated in and supported different projects that promoted cultural diversity in the Netherlands – the policy was integrated in the institution’s general policy. There are two interpretations of this change: intercultural policy has diminished in importance compared to the other main objectives of the fund. Or: intercultural policy is so self-evident, it doesn’t need a separate policy.

There have been a total of 15 translation grants from Arabic awarded between 2010 and 2020, 8 of these were granted before 2013 and the remaining 7 after.

The annual total grants budget has fluctuated between € 6.000.000 and € 11.000.000.

5.2 Flanders Literature

Flanders Literature / Literatuur Vlaanderen is an autonomous government institution that “aims to facilitate a widely accessible literary landscape and to ensure better visibility for literature from Flanders at home and abroad.” It identifies “quality, professionalism and diversity as the core values of everything it does and stands for.”

In contrast to the different approaches and initiatives of the Dutch Literature Foundation, Flanders Literature has given 4 incentive grants over the years for Arabic-Dutch translators. An incentive grant is meant to assist a translator to come to the attention of publishers, and eventually apply for a project grant. There was a total of 2 incentive grants awarded to translators between 2010 and 2020.

The annual grants budget started at around € 2.000.000 at the beginning of the decade and increasing yearly up to € 6.900.000.

Like the Dutch Foundation, Flanders Literature also promotes Flemish authors and books in the world. Interestingly, both organisations mentioned that their attempts to connect with the publishing world in the Maghreb and Middle East have proved difficult, despite staff visits to book fairs in the region, and particularly the Gulf book fairs, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah. In

countries like France, the United Kingdom or China, the relevant infrastructure is relatively clear, while the Arabic publishing world operates in a vast region, where it may be difficult to establish connections and obtain information and publishing data, and where, according to accounts, readers prefer Arabic language works by local authors or read books directly in the two widely spoken languages, English or French.

5.3 Centre of Expertise in Literary Translation

The Centre for Expertise in Literary Translation (or ELV – Expertisecentrum Literair Vertalen) is a Dutch-Flemish collaboration between Taalunie, KU Leuven, Utrecht University, Dutch Foundation for Literature and Flanders Literature. The main objective is to help further professionalise the sphere of literary translation from foreign languages into Dutch and vice versa, by means of workshops and mentorships, and by providing opportunities for translators to connect and network. More importantly, the ELV has launched their online *Kennisbank* (knowledge base) in 2018, which includes a wide spectrum of information on translation theory, references guides and professional information on negotiating, pitching and funding. As well as information for translators, the ELV works on visibility of literary translators with the *Vertalersbestand* (translators database) where literary translators are invited to upload their own profile and can be found on a trustworthy website.

A conversation with Sander Grasman – project officer for the ELV – confirms that both the *Kennisbank* and the *Vertalersbestand* have taken up most of the ELV's time in the past years, with fruitful results. Before that, ELV focused on organising workshops, but now their efforts have shifted to getting translators on the website and providing them with a range of resources. By making relevant information readily available, the ELV empowers translators who can educate themselves on matters relevant to their professional careers and connect with others.

In the past few years, there have been two successful applications concerning Arabic: one was a development grant for a translator into Dutch, the other a mentorship for a translator into Arabic. In 2011 the ELV organised an intensive course on translation from Arabic into Dutch, but this was not repeated due to low uptake. Though Arabic *is* a language the ELV is keen to invest in it, all applicants need to meet the same criteria and their motivation and attitude is

assessed. As for mentorships, the ELV doesn't assess translation quality of the candidates beforehand and leaves this to the mentor and eventually the publisher.

Decisions on policy, initiatives and grants are always made in consultation with ELV partners.

The annual budget of the ELV is € 250.000.⁴⁰

6 Conclusion and recommendations

A preliminary conclusion regarding the possible low volume of sales and titles of translated Arabic literature in the Netherlands, as mentioned in the first part of the analysis of the bibliography, was the interest of the Dutch readership and dwindling book sales across the board. But that is too easy a conclusion to make: yes, if publishers see low sale rates, they will probably adjust their publishing strategy.

The overview of events, initiatives and sheer activity surrounding Arabic language literature – albeit small-scale – completes the wider picture, places publishing in a context and testifies to an interest on the part of organisations, participants and audiences that cannot be ignored.

Interplay contains a verb

The events and initiatives surrounding Arabic literature are mainly focused on cultural exchange and lowering barriers between people and cultures. But as tends to be the case with live and participatory events, they are single interventions that may not be embedded in the larger infrastructure. Organising a festival surrounding Arabic literature or using the MENA region as an artistic theme is quite special and isn't something that happens every day. That is also how these events present themselves, highlighting their desire to do away with stereotypes surrounding the MENA region. The audiences who are attracted to these events already share this desire and may themselves be contributing to challenging stereotypes in day-to-day life – active engagement and follow-up with audiences will strengthen actual exchange.

⁴⁰ In contrast to the Dutch Foundation for Literature and Flanders Literature that publish their annual report with an overview of the finances, there are no online sources for specific annual reports for the ELV. The ELV itself is not a foundation, therefore it's not obliged to disclose financial information.

The importance of a network

The key figures interviewed for this research know of each other and will undoubtedly coincidentally meet. However, there appears to be little interaction within this seemingly small group of specialists. Reaching out to likeminded people who share the same interests also has an impact on the world outside what could be seen as an exclusive circle, creating ripples that in turn attract attention.

Universities can cooperate and exchange ideas, students, courses if the bar is low enough, meaning that it should be easy to make a connection with faculty at another university and it can be productive and inspiring to share insights. For BA students majoring in Arabic language and literature it could give them a sense of being part of a bigger group and not just the handful at their own institution.

Accessible networks for people outside academia can be formed by book clubs or poetry nights as possible follow-ups of cultural and literary events. Even a newsletter specifically targeting Dutch-speaking people interested in Arabic literature or culture, could be the start of network that feels 'close to home'.

If the Covid pandemic taught the literary world anything in Western Europe, it is that people do have money to spend on literature, but they need to be shown the way.

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Annex I University degrees

Type	University	Focus	Language specific ECTS	Type of language education	No. of first year students
BA	University of Amsterdam	Language, literature and communication	30	Colloquial Egyptian-Arabic, then MSA & Arabic alphabet.	6
BA	University of Utrecht	Islam and Quran	30	MSA in the first year, islamic texts in second year	4 (but over 90 minor students)
BA	University of Groningen		30	MSA	16
BA	Radboud University		15	MSA in the first year, classical texts in second years	12
BA	University of Leiden	Language, literature and islam	30	MSA in the first year, colloquial in the second	19
BA	KU Leuven				
BA	KU Leuven (Antwerp campus)				
MA	University of Amsterdam	Translation	varies	Translation workshops	
MA	KU Leuven (Antwerp campus)	Translation (literary track)	varies	Translation workshops	
RMA	University of Utrecht & KU Leuven	Literary translation	varies	Translation workshops	

Annex II Grants provided by the Dutch Foundation for Literature and Flanders Literature

Title	Type of grant	Publisher	Type	Writer	Translator	Year
Zuqaq al-midaq [De Midaksteeg]	Translator grant	De Geus	Book	Naguib Mahfouz	Djûke Poppinga	2010
De zaak van de mensen tegen de dieren	Publishing grant and translator grant	Bulaaq	Book	De Zuivere Broeders van Basra	Remke Kruk	2010
Madih al-karahiya [De poorten van het paradijs]	Translator grant	De Geus	Book	Khaled Khalifa	Aafke Heuvink	2010
Wara' al-firdaus	Translator grant	Maarten Muntinga	Book	Mansura Izz Eddin	Djûke Poppinga	2011
Leven en legende van Agoun'chich	Publishing grant and translator grant	Athenaeum-Polak & Van Genneep	Book	Mohammed Khaïr-Eddine	Hester Tollenaar	2011
Jaum koetila az-za'iem [De dag dat de leider werd vermoord]	Translator grant	De Geus	Book	Naguib Mahfouz	Djûke Poppinga	2012
at-Tuburu [Goudstof]	Publishing grant and translator grant	Athenaeum-Polak & Van Genneep	Book	Ibrahim al-Kuni	Jan Jaap de Ruiter	2012
al-Samt wa al-sakhab [Een dag van stilte en lawaai]	Translator grant	Van Genneep	Book	Nihad Sirees	Djûke Poppinga	2013
La sakakin fi matabix hadzihi al-madina [Er zijn geen messen in de keukens van deze stad]	Translator grant	De Geus	Book	Khaled Khalifa	Djûke Poppinga	2014
Woedjoeh [Gezichten]	Translator grant	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Book	Mohammed Choukri	Djûke Poppinga	2015
Nadi as-sajjaraat [De automobielclub van Caïro]	Translator grant	De Geus	Book	Alaa al-Aswani	Djûke Poppinga	2015
Malkoet hadzihi al-ard [Koninkrijk der aarde]	Translator grant	De Geus	Book	Hoda Barakat	Djûke Poppinga	2016
al-Maut 'amal shaqqin [De dood is een zware klus]	Translator grant	De Geus	Book	Khaled Khalifa	Djûke Poppinga	2017

Miyah mutasahira (Schoonheid raast in mij tot ik sterf)	Literature Flanders - Stimulating grant for emerging literary translators	Polis	Book	Hazim Kamaledin	Sarah Michiel	2017
La tusadiquni in hadathtak 'an al-harb [Geloof me niet als ik vertel over de oorlog]	Translator grant	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Poetry collection	Asmaa Azaizeh	Nsrine Mbarki	2019
Mudhakirat assarir alfarigh (Dagboek van een leeg bed)	Literature Flanders - Stimulating grant for emerging literary translators	Bebuquin Toneelhuis	Play	Mokhalad Rasem	Marthe Nelissen	2020

Annex III Events mentioned in the study

Event	Date	Details	Target group	No. of participants
Intensieve cursus Literair Vertalen in het Nederlands (Intensive course for literary translation in Dutch)	2010, 7-11 November		Emerging literary translators	Arabic: 5, total: 19
El Hizjra Literatuurprijs (El Hizjra Literary Award)	2010-2015	Literary awards organised by El Hizjra. Before 2016 it was a stand-alone event. From 2016 onwards it has been incorporated in 'Nacht van de Arabische literatuur'	Emerging writers from the Maghreb and Arab world	
Winternachten	2010-2020	Annual international literary festival organised by Writers Unlimited with a focus on social and cultural debate. 'Free the word!' is a cooperation with PEN that is incorporated in the festival.		
Read my world Arabische Literatuur	2013, 13-15 September	First edition of 'Read my world' festival. Every edition has its theme, the first one was Arabic literature		
International Literature Festival Utrecht	2016, 22-23 April	First edition of annual literature festival, previously known as City 2 Cities. During the 2016 edition there was a special focus on writers from Syria as well as a special		

		publication 'Wie wij zijn: een literaire kennismaking met Syrië' - with selections of short stories, poems and snippets.	
Nacht van de Arabische literatuur	2016, 26 November	First edition of a festival dedicated to Arabic literature or works from writers from the MENA region. Organised by El Hizjra	
El Hizjra Literatuurprijs (El Hizjra Literary Award)	2016-2019	Annual literary award, incorporated in 'Nacht van de Arabische literatuur'	Emerging writers from the Maghreb and Arab world
Nacht van de Arabische literatuur	2017, 9 December	Second edition of the festival	
Nacht van de Arabische literatuur	2018, 24 November	Third edition of the festival	
Read my world Marokko	2019, 10-12 October	Seventh edition of 'Read my world' festival, this year focused on Morocco and its literature	3500
Nacht van de Arabische literatuur	2019, 2 November	Fourth edition of the festival	
El Hizjra Literatuurprijs (El Hizjra Literary Award)	2020, 15 November	Online stream of awards, due to Covid-measures	Emerging writers from the Maghreb and Arab world
Crossing Border		Annual festival with a focus on literature and music	
The Chronicles		Annual project by Crossing Border, connecting emerging authors to emerging	Emerging authors and translators

		translators. The editions in 2012 and 2019 included authors writing in Arabic.
Poetry International Festival Rotterdam		Annual poetry festival, with poets from around the world organised by Stichting Poetry International.
Kalima Fiesta (cancelled due to Covid-measures)	2020, 19-21 March	First edition of poetryfestival focusing on Arabic poetry, but also Dutch and Francophone poetry

Annex IV Bibliography of Arabic literary works translated into Dutch 2010 – 2020

Target language title (Dutch)	Writer	Translator	Source language	Publisher	Type	Notes	Year	ISBN
Met Safaa komt de regen	Ahmad al Malik	Judith Wesselingh*	Arabic>French	De Geus	Novel	Indirect translation from French In collaboration with Oxfam Novib	2010	9789044512250
De zaak van de mensen tegen de dieren	De Zuivere Broeders van Basra	Remke Kruk	Arabic	Bulaaq			2010	9789054601722
Ik wil trouwen	Ghada Abdel Aal	Djûke Poppinga & Abeer Soliman	Arabic	Nieuw Amsterdam	Novel		2010	9789046808221
Kamila, het verhaal van mijn moeder	Hanaan as-Sjaikh	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2011	9789044514353
De poorten van het paradijs	Khaled Khalifa	Aafke Heuvink	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2011	9789044513882
De Midaksteeg	Naguib Mahfouz	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2011	9789044511413
Goudstof	Ibrahim al-Kuni	Jan Jaap de Ruiter	Arabic	Athenaeum-Polak & Van Genneep	Novel	Part of the series <i>De Berberbibliotheek</i>	2012	9789025369590
Andere levens	Iman Humaydan	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel	In collaboration with Oxfam Novib	2013	9789044532371
De dag dat de leider werd vermoord	Naguib Mahfouz	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2014	9789044524970
Een dag van stilte en lawaai	Nihad Sirees	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	Van Genneep	Novel		2014	9789461642523
Er zijn geen messen in de keukens van deze stad	Khaled Khalifa	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2015	9789044533828
Gezichten	Mohammed Choukri	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Novel		2015	9789491921155

Vrouwen van de wind	Razan al Maghrabi	Hassnae Bouazza	Arabic	De Geus	Novel	In collaboration with Oxfam Novib	2015	9789044535280
Rituelen, tekenen en veranderingen	Sa'd Allah Wannous	Helge Daniëls & Margriet Agricola	Arabic	Bebuquin	Play	In collaboration with Moussem and Toneelshuis	2015	9789075175530
De automobielclub van Caïro	Alaa al-Aswani	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2016	9789044516098
Schoonheid raast in mij tot ik sterf	Hazim Kamaledin	Sarah Michiel	Arabic	Polis	Novel	Rare Flemish publication	2016	9789463101677
Hongerjaren	Mohammed Choukri	Lourina de Voogd	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Novel		2016	9789491921193
De wolkenmuzikant	Ali Badr	Richard van Leeuwen	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Novel		2017	9789491921322
Koninkrijk der aarde	Hoda Barakat	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2017	9789044537024
De dood is een zware klus	Khaled Khalifa	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2017	9789044539288
Ik hier jij daar	Ghayath Almadhoun Anne Vegter	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic & Dutch	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Poetry collection	Co-authors, Arabic poems by Almadhoun translated in Dutch and Dutch poems by Vegter.	2017	9789491921346
De dictator	Issam Mahfouz	Lore Baeten	Arabic	Bebuquin	Play	In collaboration with Moussem	2017	9789075175677
Lijkententoonstelling	Hassan Blasim	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Novel		2017	9789491921315
Frankenstein in Bagdad	Ahmed Saadawi	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	De Geus	Novel		2018	9781786073976
De opgejaagden	Dima Wannous	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	Uitgeverij Signatuur	Novel		2018	9789056726089
Geloof me niet als ik vertel over de oorlog	Asmaa Azaizeh	Nisrine Mbarki	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Novel		2019	9789491921674

De blauwe pen	Samar Yazbek	Martine Woudt*	Arabic>French	Uitgeverij Orlando	Novel	Indirect translation, from French In collaboration with Oxfam Novib	2019	9789493081185
Grappen voor de schutters	Mazen Maarouf	Richard van Leeuwen	Arabic	Uitgeverij de Harmonie	Short story collection		2019	9789463360845
Neem dit lichaam	Fatena al Ghorra	Nisrine Mbarki	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Poetry collection		2019	9789491921568
Geiten	Liwaa Yazji	Lore Baeten	Arabic	Bebuquin	Play	In collaboration with Moussem	2019	9789075175738
Je zult me vinden in elk woord dat ik schrijf	Lamia Makaddam	Abdelkader Benali	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Poetry collection		2020	9789491921759
Allah 99	Hassan Blasim	Djûke Poppinga	Arabic	Uitgeverij Jurgen Maas	Novel		2021	9789491921728
Ik ben geen zee. Maar mijn hart is vol meeuwen	Hosheng Ossi	Lore Baeten	Arabic	Poëziecentrum	Poetry collection		2021	9789056553098
Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi	Tayeb Saddiki	Nisrine Mbarki	Arabic	Bebuquin	Play	In collaboration with Moussem	2021	9789075175837