

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

a report prepared by Duygu Tekgül

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## LITERATURE ACROSS FRONTIERS

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# 1 Executive Summary

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

## 1.1 Framework

The present report is part of a study on literary translation into English in the United Kingdom and Ireland from the three major official languages of the South-East Mediterranean region: Arabic, Hebrew and Turkish. The research was conducted within the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean Translation Programme, a cooperation between the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Literature Across Frontiers and Transeuropéennes, and specifically as part of the mapping of translation flows in the region coordinated by Transeuropéennes throughout 2010 and 2011. This report focuses on translations from modern and contemporary Turkish literature into English and is available in electronic format together with the related reports on translation from Arabic and Hebrew in the series *Making Literature Travel* produced by Literature Across Frontiers.

## 1.2 Method and scope

The study covers the period of two decades from 1990 until 2010 and examines the entire context in which literary translation takes place in the British Isles. It is therefore based not only on assessment of published titles (fiction, memoir, literary essays and poetry), but on a survey of the whole literary scene, including the culture of live literary events at festivals and venues, media reception of translated literature, training opportunities and support structures relevant to literary translators, as well as policies of key arts bodies and financial support provided by public and private sources. Much of the gathered information comes from relevant websites and printed material (including book reviews and critical articles), as well as from interviews with publishers, translators and other individuals involved in the process of translating and promoting Turkish literature.

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

The study focuses on translation from Turkish into English, and does not take into consideration autochthonous minority languages spoken in the British Isles - Irish and Scottish Gaelic, Scots and Welsh, nor does it engage with translations from other languages spoken in Turkey such as dialects of Kurdish. We can however assume that, with small exceptions of individual translations produced as part of a project or for a festival hosting authors from Turkey, there have been no published translations into these languages. As for Kurdish, some translations of poetry have been produced by the Poetry Translation Centre in London with funding from Arts Council England, and published online.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.3 Conclusions

### 1.3.1 Literary translation in the British Isles

Despite the fact that the combined British and Irish publishing industry is one of the most productive in Europe with an average annual output of around 120,000 - 130,000 books, the British Isles rank lowest when it comes to publishing translations. The recent report on barriers to literary translation in the English-speaking world estimates that 1.5 - 2% of all books published in the UK are translations or around 2,500 per year, and that far fewer are literary translations.<sup>2</sup> This is in sharp contrast with the numbers of translations published in other European countries, where in smaller markets such as the Czech Republic, Finland, Estonia and Slovenia translations represented 20-30% of all published new titles over the period between 1990 - 2005, while France and Germany had a translation output of 10-15% over the same period.<sup>3</sup>

The reasons for the low level of interest in translated literature on the part of English-language publishers and the reading public at large has been the subject of much speculation and discussion. In general, several factors are seen as contributing to the perceived cultural insularity and attitude of indifference towards translated literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland: the international hegemony of the English language combined with the low value placed on learning foreign languages, and the fact that Britain, as a former Empire, has a tradition of exporting rather than importing cultural products, particularly when it comes to books and literature, an area in which it is particularly self-sufficient.

Publishing translations in the United Kingdom and Ireland is therefore a specialist activity catering to a niche readership and is undertaken mainly by small publishers concentrated in England and particularly in London, who are often dependent on public subsidies, both from UK funding sources and from source-language institutions and grants programmes, in this case the TEDA programme administered by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey since 2005. Subsidies are needed not only for translation costs but also for marketing and promotional events with authors. It has been only recently that the profile of literary translation has become more prominent and local literary events have become more international in the true sense of the word. There are also several recent initiatives which have given the UK literary scene a decidedly international dimension: among them is the setting up of the Free Word Centre, the first UK "literature house" in London; another is the Literary Translation Centre established at

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<sup>1</sup> [www.poetrytranslation.org](http://www.poetrytranslation.org)

<sup>2</sup> *Research into Barriers to Translation and Best Practices*, conducted by Dalkey Archive Press for the Global Translation Initiative, March 2011, available in pdf at [www.dalkeyarchive.com](http://www.dalkeyarchive.com)

<sup>3</sup> *Publishing translations in Europe, Trends 1990-2005*, Literature Across Frontiers, 2010. Available in pdf at [www.lafpublications.org](http://www.lafpublications.org) and [www.lit-across-frontiers.org](http://www.lit-across-frontiers.org)

the London Book Fair which has become increasingly more international in its outlook and where Turkey will be the market focus in 2013. The international content of literary events and festivals has also grown in the past decade and especially in the past five years or so. Despite these positive developments, made possible by the encouragement and support of public bodies and private foundations, translation remains something of a niche activity both in terms of publishing, distribution, media coverage and readership.

### **1.3.2 Literature translated from Turkish - volume and trends**

The history of translation from Turkish literature into English is over a century old, but until the 1990s publication of Turkish titles has been at best sporadic (Nâzım Hikmet, Yaşar Kemal), and interest in books translated from Turkish has been determined by socio-political factors rather than by the desire to explore the literary culture of Turkey for its own merits. As a result, books from Turkey have often been approached primarily as a source of socio-political commentary or documentary, rather than as literary works per se. Only in recent years has there been an increased interest in Turkish titles, thanks to the promotional efforts of the Turkish authorities and literary agencies and due to the award of the Nobel Prize to Orhan Pamuk in 2006. 51 titles were published between 1990 - 2010, with only 9 titles published in the first decade, after which the volume has quadrupled. Several titles are in preparation with grants from the TEDA programme of the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism.

In terms of genre, the 51 titles include 1 book of essays, 4 memoirs, 7 collections of short stories, 14 collections of poetry, and 22 novels (including crime), and 3 magazines have dedicated issues to Turkish literature.

Turkish titles are published mostly by smaller independent publishers with the exception of Collins Harvill publication of Kemal Yaşar's novels in the early 1990s and Faber and Faber publishing Orhan Pamuk. 7 titles were published by Milet Publishing – a small independent specializing in Turkish and bi-lingual books for children, and which has since moved to the US – while 4 titles have been published by Saqi / Telegram and 3 crime titles by Serpent's Tail. All the published books are by Turkish authors, with one exception, Cypriot Mehmet Yashin's poetry collection published in 2001 by Middlesex University Press.

### **1.3.3 Need for reliable data on published translations**

One of the first problems faced by researchers into the reception of translated literature in the British Isles is the lack of data on published translations. In the case of translations from Turkish, a bibliography compiled by Saliha Paker and Melike Yılmaz in 2007 was available, and had to be updated by compiling information from public libraries, publishers' catalogues and online booksellers. The composite report on translations from Arabic, Hebrew and Turkish highlights the need for a reliable mechanism to collect and analyse data on translated books.

### **1.3.4 The role of the media**

The study concludes that the British Isles lack the extensive print and audiovisual media coverage that books and literature have in some other European countries, and that only major festivals which secure media sponsorships receive comprehensive national coverage. With some negligible exceptions, television

and radio almost never deal with literature in translation, while very little space is offered to reviews of translations in review sections of national papers and literary magazines. Reviews of translations from Turkish are no exception, with well-informed, in-depth reviews written by cultural and literary journalists familiar with the language and cultural context being extremely rare. Serious critical assessment of literary translation is therefore missing or is restricted to academic journals, and this in turn has implications for setting translation quality standards.

### **1.3.5 Translators, translator training, work conditions and quality control**

While there are many literary translators working from Turkish into English, the vast majority have received no specialised literary translation training. While four UK universities offer degrees in Turkish, there is no literary translation training currently available in the UK. However, it is widely acknowledged that translation studies courses do not necessarily produce literary translators, and it appears that short-term training and skills development opportunities, such as summer schools, seminars, workshops and mentoring schemes would be the best options to offer those who might wish to become literary translators, or have already started publishing translations from Turkish. Currently, the annual workshop co-organised by Boğazici University, Okan University and Literature Across Frontiers with support from the EU and Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism on the Turkish island of Cunda is the only opportunity for translators into English to work with their peers.

Translators from Turkish mostly have to have other sources of income and literary translation is not generally seen as a viable career choice among students and graduates. On the other hand, the connection between academe and literary translation is relatively strong, and the fact that translation practice is not accorded academic and research credit is considered to be a serious problem both in the British Isles and the US.

### **1.3.6 Promotion of Turkish literature and support for translation**

The Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism have worked efficiently to promote Turkish literature abroad, and the TEDA subvention programme, established in 2005 to fund translation projects, awarded 15 grants to UK publishers by the end of 2010. This is a rather low uptake compared to the US (40 titles) and other countries (1.8% of all supported titles are published in the UK, none in Ireland). At the same time, private agencies such as AnatoliaLit, Istanbul Literary Agency and the largest Turkish agency Kalem have been working in parallel to promote Turkish literature to UK publishers.

While very successful in supporting print publications, the TEDA programme has to take into consideration the importance of electronic publishing which can reach many more readers than books and extend its support to translation for websites and electronic books.

The study concludes that there is a need to establish a better-coordinated system of support for the entire process, from selection of titles, to translation quality monitoring, editing and the marketing of books, and that, given the importance of translation into English, concentrated effort should be made to strengthen

synergies between existing private and public efforts, particularly in the run-up to the London Book Fair 2013 Turkey market focus.

### **1.3.7 Literary exchange and mobility**

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

Funding bodies therefore need to recognize the significance of literary exchange and cooperation on projects which create connections between writers, translators, literary event organisers, editors and other professionals on the one hand and the general public on the other, and which ultimately generate translations, but not necessarily in the traditional sense of translating and publishing individual titles. All projects that contribute to mutual understanding and dialogue through literature need to be seen as eligible for financial support.

Mobility is key to such projects and the lack of support for mobility compounded by EU visa restrictions are major obstacles to cooperation and access outside the commercial sphere of the publishing trade. Mobility of all categories of professionals involved in the international promotion and translation of literature plays an important role and needs to be better supported, both in relation to the marketing of published books through public events with authors and translators, and in relation to exchanges, visits and collaborative projects which would go beyond festival appearances by one of two celebrity authors; Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak.

## **1.4 Main conclusions**

### **1.4.1 Key role of subsidies**

Whether we are looking at publishing or live literary events, the main conclusion of the composite report is that the “commercial imperative” is the main obstacle to improved access to international writing, including Turkish literature. Public support and (to a lesser degree) private sponsorship therefore remain the *sine qua non* of international content, despite the fact that commercially successful publishers and festivals are well positioned to take the perceived risks associated with the publishing and promotion of translated literature. Support for a raft of measures and activities is an essential prerequisite to increasing the international content of publishing and literary events in the British Isles. Such initiatives would target authors, translators, independent publishers and literature organisations working internationally, as well as the media and audiences. It is therefore necessary to continue advocating for public support for translation and the arts in general.

#### **1.4.2 Need for stronger synergies and cooperation strategies**

The second main conclusion is that there is a need for stronger synergies and cooperation strategies between all stakeholders – public bodies, private foundations, higher education and the independent arts sector – to deliver, in a sustainable way, the kinds of initiatives identified and highlighted in this study and in the composite report as examples of best practice.

#### **1.4.3 In-depth study of the current environment is called for to chart the way forward**

Given the the recent changes in literary translation infrastructure and increased interest in translation and international content, especially in England, and the re-structure of the arts funding system in 2010-2011, an in-depth study of the current reception of translated literature and a detailed analysis of potential multi-stakeholder best practice is called for in order to chart a way forward and create international opportunities which would allow sustained, on-going and fruitful cooperation and exchange.

### **1.5 Recommendations**

The following recommendations draw on the findings of the composite study and are not restricted to findings of the present study only.

#### **1.5.1 Bibliography and translation statistics**

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

#### **1.5.2 Translators, training and conditions of work**

There is a need to develop and implement a coordinated raft of measures serving translators:

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

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

hard to come by, except through an appeal to individual publishers and national translation funding agencies.

### **1.5.3 The book trade**

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

### **1.5.4 Outreach to independent presses**

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

### **1.5.5 E-publishing**

So far, some programmes supporting translation do not extend to digital publishing and are restricted to print publishing only, and in some cases only in book form. The potential of e-publishing for the dissemination of translated literature needs to be assessed, whether in relation to e-books, internet publishing or the growing influence of literary websites and blogs.

### **1.5.6 Translation and the media**

It has not been possible within the scope of this report to examine media coverage of translated work outside the mainstream press, including radio, television and online material. Access to individual editors and freelance reviewers, as well as publishers' publicists and marketing departments would be invaluable not only for information on actual coverage, but for the extensive knowledge publicists in particular have about responses to and perceptions of work in translation.

### **1.5.7 Review culture**

Review editors in the UK and Ireland are known for not always ensuring adequate space for translation reviews, proper recognition of translation quality, and even translators' names. A concerted effort is needed to change this reviewing culture across the board, building on the work already done under the aegis of the organisations such as the Translators' Association and the Society of Authors, British Centre for Literary Translation, and the English PEN. Continued support for workshops and seminars on reviewing, strengthening the role of translators as reviewers, and developing other measures to improve reviewing by mainstream media are called for, as well as a specialized review publication dedicated to more detailed analysis to improve translation quality as a result of qualified peer review.

### **1.5.8 Libraries**

Libraries are a key component in providing access to work in translation. Although library budgets have been severely reduced in recent years and some libraries around the country are currently under the threat of closure, it has not been possible within the framework of this report to assess the impact of those kinds of cuts on the dissemination of work in translation. Both borrowing statistics and acquisition policy and trends would reveal useful information and patterns of interest on the part of the public, as well as make it possible to draw closer connections between the impact of, for example, reviews and festival or media appearances, and spikes in interest by the reading public. In addition, library borrowing statistics might yield powerful arguments about demand for translated books that would not be evident from sales figures alone.

### **1.5.9 Promotion of literature, relationship between translation funders and publishers**

Further research is needed into the relationship between publishers and the organisations and foundations that support translation, to assess the impact of their efforts to publicise literature and to support translation and literary exchange in general.

### **1.5.10 Ensuring diversity in publishing and programming of festivals, venues and projects**

More resources need to be made available to organisations, venues and smaller presses publishing and promoting work in translation in order to ensure that diversity across culture, gender, subject matter, language and genre is achieved in publishing and promotion of literature in general, and so that small, independent presses can effectively compete in a crowded market largely hostile to translation.

### **1.5.11 Support for literary exchange and mobility**

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

### **1.5.12 A centralised online resource**

At present it is not always easy to access information about translation matters in general and about translated books and related events in particular. Attempts have been made to establish such an online resource in the past, for example the British Council translation website, with mixed results. Yet, a high-quality, current and comprehensive online resource with relevant links would greatly benefit the overall profile of translated literature and the related sector.

### **1.5.13 Advocacy and funding for translation**

Translation into English is a priority, as it provides for onward dissemination and eventual translation into other languages. New and innovative approaches need to be developed to argue the case for financial support for literary translation into English – arguments about social cohesion, intercultural dialogue and international relations, in addition to making a case for diversity and access to international culture, with a

view to tapping into sources of funding that are not traditionally available for the arts, literature, translation or publishing – such as charitable foundations, private individuals and innovative sponsorships.

## 2 Preface

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

### 2.1 Background

The present report is the result of a study of literary translation into English in the United Kingdom and Ireland from the three major official languages of the South-East Mediterranean region which was conducted as part of the Euro-Mediterranean Translation Programme, a cooperation between the Anna Lindh Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue between Cultures, Literature Across Frontiers and Transeuropéennes, and specifically as part of the mapping of translation flows in the region coordinated by Transeuropéennes throughout 2010 and 2011. This report focuses on translations from modern and contemporary Turkish literature into English and is available in electronic format together with the related reports on translation from Arabic and Hebrew in the series *Making Literature Travel* produced by Literature Across Frontiers.

### 2.2 Method and scope

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

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

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

nor does it engage with translations from other languages used in Turkey such as Kurdish. We can however assume that, with small exceptions of individual translations produced as part of a project or for a festival hosting authors from Turkey, there have been no published translations into these languages. As for Kurdish, some translations of poetry have been produced by the Poetry Translation Centre in London with funding from Arts Council England, and published online.

### 2.3 Literary translation in the British Isles

Unlike in other European countries, translation does not form a natural part of the literary life in the UK and Ireland – with the exception of translation between English and the autochthonous minority languages spoken here. Despite the fact that the British and Irish publishing industry is one of the most productive in Europe with an average annual output of around 120,000 - 130,000 books, the British Isles rank lowest in Europe when it comes to publishing translations and, unlike in the rest of Europe, no institution collects data on published translations, making it impossible to establish the exact number and the percentage translated literature represents. The recent report on barriers to literary translation in the English-speaking world estimates that 1.5 - 2% of all books published in the UK are translations or around 2,500 per year, and that far fewer are literary translations.<sup>4</sup> This is in sharp contrast with the numbers of translations published in European countries, where in smaller markets such the Czech Republic, Finland, Estonia and Slovenia translations represented 20-30% of all published new titles over the period between 1990 - 2005, while France and Germany had a translation output of 10-15% over the same period.<sup>5</sup>

The reasons for the low level of interest in translated literature on the part of English-language publishers and the reading public at large has been the subject of much speculation and discussion. In general, several factors are seen as contributing to the perceived cultural insularity and attitude of indifference towards translated literature in the United Kingdom and Ireland: the international hegemony of the English language combined with the low value placed on learning foreign languages, and the fact that Britain, as a former Empire, has a tradition of exporting rather than importing cultural products, particularly when it comes to books and literature are among the key cited reasons. Another reason often given is that of “self-sufficiency”: the literature published in the British Isles is by and large of a high standard at the literary end and of high commercial value at the bestseller end, and as such amply satisfies the needs of a wide range of readers as well as constituting an important export article. Books by English-language authors, including immigrants writing in English, appear to meet possible interest in writing about other places and cultures, as does the supply of writing from the “periphery” of the Commonwealth, which has in recent decades often displaced the “centre”, with Anglophone authors from India, Africa and the Caribbean achieving considerable international success.

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

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<sup>4</sup> *Research into Barriers to Translation and Best Practices*, conducted by Dalkey Archive Press for the Global Translation Initiative, March 2011, available in pdf format at [www.dalkeyarchive.com](http://www.dalkeyarchive.com)

<sup>5</sup> *Publishing translations in Europe, Trends 1990-2005*, Literature Across Frontiers, 2010. Available in pdf at [www.lafpublications.org](http://www.lafpublications.org) and [www.lit-across-frontiers.org](http://www.lit-across-frontiers.org)

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

#### 2.4 **Literary exchange as part of fostering international cultural relations**

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

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

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

Turkey will be the Market Focus at the **London Book Fair 2013**, with the British Council in charge of the cultural programme in cooperation with Turkey’s Ministry of Culture and Tourism, which will no doubt generate new publishing relationships and translations.

## 2.5 Overview of support for literary exchange and translation infrastructure

### England

**Arts Council England (ACE)**, the national development agency for the arts in England, distributing public money from the Government and the National Lottery, has been the primary source of funding for literary translation activities in England. No grant specific to translation from Turkish is listed among ACE grants 2006-2010. The only title recorded in the bibliography prepared for this study as having received ACE funding was Latife Tekin's *Dear Shameless Death*, published by Marion Boyars in 2001. Grants for the Arts support provided to publishers such as Arc Publications and Comma Press has contributed to the publication of titles by Turkish authors (see bibliography).

ACE supports several organisations under its National Portfolio Funding programme. One of them is the **British Centre for Literary Translation (BCLT)**, based at the University of East Anglia, which is active in literary translation training through its summer school for emerging literary translators. The school consists of several parallel week-long workshops led by practising literary translators, each one focussing on the work of one author who is present to discuss and answer questions, and has so far covered languages ranging from French and Spanish to Polish, Basque and Japanese. A one-to-one mentoring programme for young translators was established by the BCLT together with the **Translators Association** in 2010 and covers twelve languages in 2012. Turkish has however not been included in any of BCLT's activities to date.

**English PEN** is another organisation with a translation focus supported by Arts Council England. Its Writers in Translation programme award grants to UK publishers to "help promote, market and champion titles of outstanding literary value which have a clear link to the PEN charter". The programme has so far supported one title translated from Turkish, Orhan Kemal's *Idle Years*, published by Peter Owen Publishers, 2008. Also supported was the title *The Bridge of the Golden Horn* by the German-writing Turkish author Emine Sevgi Özdamar, translated by Martin Chalmers, published by Serpent's Tail in 2007.

The Global Translation Initiative (GTI), based at English PEN, aims to strengthen support for literary translation and share information between English-language translation communities throughout the world. The GTI project is supported by Arts Council England and works in partnership with organisations throughout the global translation community.<sup>6</sup>

In 2010 Arts Council England devolved its support for translation to English PEN which will administer its new translation programme from 2012.

In late 2010 the **Yunus Emre Turkish Cultural Centre** was inaugurated in London as part of a network of centres opened around the world by the **Yunus Emre Institute**, following the example of cultural centres and institutes named after literary classics, with the aim to promote Turkish language and culture.

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<sup>6</sup> For more information see [www.englishpen.org](http://www.englishpen.org)

## Northern Ireland

The **Arts Council of Northern Ireland** is the lead development agency for the arts in Northern Ireland, offering a broad range of funding opportunities. It cooperates with cross-border agencies in the Republic of Ireland, especially in matters related to the Irish language. Its International Policy document<sup>7</sup> states the Council's "commitment to, and ambitions for, trans-national interaction for the arts sector". The Council's aim is to "ensure that Northern Ireland's arts organisations, artists and arts can connect internationally and develop an international perspective through profiling work, exchanging ideas and developing relationships". This aim is achieved through close cooperation with, among others, the British Council, Visiting Arts and the other UK and Irish arts councils.<sup>8</sup>

No publishers, organisations or initiatives relevant to this study in Northern Ireland are known to the author.

## Scotland

In Scotland, translations are published almost solely by one publisher, Canongate, which, has so far not published any Turkish titles. However, the **Scottish Arts Council**, recently transformed into **Creative Scotland**, a body which provides public support for all art forms, including film, has encouraged international literary exchange through projects. Its three-year corporate plan 2011-2014 *Investing in Scotland's Creative Future*<sup>9</sup> announces the ambition to see Scotland as one of the world's most creative nations by 2020 highlights "international" as one of the three cross-cutting themes underpinning the organisation's strategic outlook for the decade, identifying one of its main aspirations: "Culture becoming the calling card for Scotland internationally – welcoming the world's artists and audiences." The three year plan states that "Creative Scotland will support international work at a strategic and infrastructural level in the first year of our plan and will encourage research and development initiatives coming forward from the Sector".

As well as subsidising the **Edinburgh International Book Festival** which has featured several Turkish authors on its programme in the past decade, and **Stanza, Scotland's International Poetry Festival**, it has supported international collaborations between the **Scottish Poetry Library** and Literature Across Frontiers, which included poets from Turkey and Scotland working on translations and performing at EDIBF.

## Wales

There is an active international outlook and interest in other literatures in Wales, with a particular focus on lesser-used languages. **Arts Council Wales** supports international literature and literary activities through **Wales Arts International**, a partnership with the British Council, and **Wales Literature Exchange**

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<sup>7</sup> Available in pdf from [http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/artforms/international\\_arts.htm](http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/artforms/international_arts.htm)

<sup>8</sup> *Artform and Specialist Area Policy 2008 - 2012: International Arts*, <http://www.artscouncil-ni.org/artforms/pdfs/International%20Arts.pdf>

<sup>9</sup> Available in pdf from <http://www.creativescotland.com/investment/investment-overview>

which promotes Welsh literature abroad and literary exchange between Wales and other countries. A recent development has seen the setting up of **Translators' House Wales**, an initiative based at the writers' centre Tŷ Newydd in Gwynedd, which has run several literary translation workshops. The **Welsh Books Council** is the funder for publishers who produce translations.

None of these initiatives have however included Turkish authors to date, and no translations from Turkish has been published in Wales during the period covered by this study. Wales however makes a significant contribution to UK's international literary exchange by hosting **Literature Across Frontiers (LAF)** the EU co-funded European Platform for Literary Exchange, Translation and Policy Debate, which has organised a number of activities with and in Turkey, including the Word Express project, and published translations of writing by young Turkish authors in its online review *Transcript*.<sup>10</sup>

## **Ireland**

In Ireland, the incidence of publishing translations - with the exception of translations between Irish and English - is extremely rare and is limited to less than a handful of (mostly poetry) publishers, for example **Poetry Ireland** and **Dedalus Press**, and even such initiatives focus mostly on translation from European languages. The only two titles published in Ireland in the period covered by the study were collections of poetry, published by Poetry Ireland, both in 1998. Literary events in Ireland follow suit and the two leading festivals, **Dublin Writers Festival** and **Cúirt Festival in Galway** have become far less international than they used to be in the early and mid-2000s. A new addition to the festival scene, the **Cork Spring Literary Festival** is now leading with an impressive international line-up for 2011.

The **Arts Council** is the national agency for funding, promoting and developing the arts in Ireland, while **Culture Ireland** supports the promotion of Ireland's arts and culture abroad, including promotion of Ireland's literature. **Ireland Literature Exchange (ILE)** is responsible for the promotion of Irish literature abroad and funds outbound and inbound translations. No Irish publisher has so far applied to translate a book from Turkish, but ILE is currently encouraging the development of literary links with Turkey by opening its 2011 translators bursaries to translators working into Turkish.

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<sup>10</sup> For more information on LAF's activities and projects go to [www.lit-across-frontiers.org](http://www.lit-across-frontiers.org) and [www.word-express.org](http://www.word-express.org)

## 3 Introduction

This introduction includes a brief survey of modern Turkish literature, followed by an overview of its translation and reception in the British Isles.

### 3.1.1 Modern Turkish literature

Modern Turkish literature is built on the vast heritage of Ottoman literature, which mostly revolved around poetry. Divan literature, or classical Ottoman poetry, was heavily influenced by Persian and Arabic sources. The oral-based folk literature was composed of epics, folktales and what could be termed the precursor of performance poetry, by *aşıks*, or bards. Novel and short story were introduced in the nineteenth century through translation, and after a period of adaptation, Turkish authors have given fine examples of these genres as well. Today literature in Turkey is rich, encompassing many genres such as novel, short story, poetry, drama, travel writing etc. and works of literature employ a wide variety of themes.

Modern Turkish literature can be periodized as late Ottoman (1839-1923), early Republican (1923-1950) and contemporary (1950 onwards). In the late Ottoman period, Turkish authors were experimenting with the new prose genres, trying to harmonize Western techniques with local themes. This trend was paralleled by the new National Literature movement in poetry, which aimed at using accessible language and the syllabic meter instead of the *aruz*, the rigid meter structure of Divan literature.

The national revival was at the heart of early Republican literature. According to literary critic Berna Moran (2004), this period was dominated by questions of East and West in many respects, urging writers to rethink techniques and themes. Azade Seyhan explains that novelists of this period ‘portrayed with deep insight the young nation’s struggle to refashion a new westernized Turkish identity and its precarious adoption of secular modernity in the shadow of a suppressed but powerful religious tradition’ (2008: 5). Moran (ibid.) argues that from 1950 onwards, novels tackled issues such as class segmentation, exploitation and the resulting injustice. Efforts to find new expressions intensified in the 1960s.

At the same time, the so-called Village Literature formed a somewhat separate branch, voicing the struggles of the rural population. These novels were written from the perspective of social realism, which permeated the works of short story writers as well.

Yaşar Kemal’s work rose into prominence in these decades. Berna Moran defines his *İnce Memed* (1955 - *Mehmed, My Hawk*) as a creative reworking of the noble bandit theme in literature (v 2: 101-123). Yaşar Kemal’s books have been widely acclaimed and have captured the imagination of generations of readers in Turkey.

Poetry employed rhymed verse, syllabic meter and ornate language until Orhan Veli called for a simplification in his 1941 manifesto *Garip* (*Strange*), which revolutionized Turkish poetry. The later *İkinci Yeni*, ‘The Second New’ movement in the 1950s, endorsed the use of imagery, association and abstraction, as opposed to the explicitness of the *Garip* movement.

Contemporary writers initiated a slow but radical change in Turkish literature when they started incorporating postmodernist elements into their prose in the 1980s. Moran (ibid.) explains that this meant a new narration style for authors like Orhan Pamuk and Latife Tekin. This opening up was also reflected in the subject matter Turkish authors picked up. According to Seyhan, contemporary Turkish authors have ‘explicitly or implicitly expressed a strong unease with the rupture in the Ottoman Turkish cultural legacy that modernization and Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s reforms brought about’ (6).

National literatures are elusive categories today. Literature in Turkey includes poetry and prose written in the languages of various cultural communities, the most prominent example being Kurdish. Furthermore, Turkish literature could broadly cover input from Cypriot literature, written in Turkish or English, and the so-called ‘immigration literature’ in Germany and other European countries, again either in Turkish or other languages. This report will focus on translations from Turkish literature written in Turkish and produced in Turkey.

In 2010 Turkey boasts a vibrant literary culture with 1724 publishers producing 32,750 titles each year. Turkey is represented in major international book fairs and Turkish authors appear in various literary events abroad.

### **3.1.2 A historical overview of translation from Turkish**

The first translation from Turkish to be published in the UK was E. J. W. Gibb’s poetry collection titled *Ottoman Poems, Translated into English Verse, In the Original Forms with Introduction, Biographical Notices, and Notes*, in 1882. Translation scholar Saliha Paker argues that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, translations were limited to specialist, often Orientalist, interest and were usually done by academics (2000: 619). Poetry and short story anthologies, compiled for a niche audience, followed for some time in this fashion. The first novel to be translated and published in the UK, Reşat Nuri Güntekin’s *The Autobiography of a Turkish Girl* (trans. Sir Wyndham Deedes) appeared in 1949. Individual authors and poets were translated into English in a haphazard way until the works of poet Nâzım Hikmet and novelist Yaşar Kemal started to dominate the Turkish presence in the UK literary scene.

Nâzım Hikmet’s poetry is marked by passion, fuelled by his commitment to communism, which resulted in prison sentences in Turkey and later lead to exile in Moscow. According to Başak Ergil (2008), the cultural reception of his works in the West has changed according to the social and political dynamics of these societies. While he was glorified as a revolutionary in the 1930s, when communism enjoyed much prestige in the West, this identity was later replaced with that of a romantic, mystic and lyric figure. Generally, Nâzım Hikmet remains the most widely translated Turkish poet; however, only three poetry collections of his work have been published in the UK, the rest being issued by US publishers.

The translations of Village Literature enjoyed an enthusiastic reception in the English-speaking world, partly because these novels were treated as ethnographies. Mahmut Makal’s *A Village in Anatolia* (translated in 1954) for example, offered a glimpse of rural Turkey for a reading public that knew very little about the Turkish society (Seyhan 2008: 85). Later, Yaşar Kemal’s novels gained popularity and became the main representative of Turkish literature in the UK. Most of his works have been translated by his late wife

Thilda Kemal, and according to Paker, her translations ‘have consistently built up an English “universe of discourse” for Yaşar Kemal’s vision of Anatolia and Istanbul as reflected in the diversity of his characters, their natural and social environment, their myths, their dialects (2000: 621)’. Yaşar Kemal is Nâzım Hikmet’s counterpart in prose, in being the most translated Turkish author. Collins Harvill published 11 of Yaşar Kemal’s novels between 1961 and 1997. However, interest in his novels started to wane in 2000’s and Harvill discontinued the books.<sup>11</sup>

The main trend in the West has been to translate and publish mainstream works or those that have gained recognition in Turkey. However, Paker points out that due to changes in norms that govern literary taste in Turkey and abroad, there have been significant omissions, such as Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, Melih Cevdet Anday, Sabahattin Ali, Oğuz Atay and Yusuf Atılgan. She adds that another factor hindering translations has been the constant evolution of the Turkish language, which has deterred non-native speakers of Turkish from undertaking translation projects (2000: 623).

### **3.1.3 The position of Turkish literature in the UK book market today**

It may be argued that, up until the 1990s, British - and other European - publishers’ selection criteria for translation matched the general perception of the Turkish identity. In other words, patriarchy, religious conservatism, and other themes that allowed an Orientalist representation were preferred. However, starting in the last decade of the twentieth century, the selection focused on novels that portrayed the Turk as ‘torn between the East and the West’. Therefore, it was the liminality of the modern Turkish society and culture that attracted attention. Orhan Pamuk, who makes use of this East-West dichotomy in his work, has been increasingly popular from 1990 onwards.

Today, translations from Turkish literature are available from a wide range of publishers including Faber and Faber, Serpent’s Tail and Shearsmans. From a publishing perspective, Faber’s acquisition of Orhan Pamuk’s *White Castle* from Carcanet in 2001 can be seen as a turning point for Turkish literature in the UK, since the publication of his novels by an established literary publisher in quick succession meant market penetration and higher visibility. However, due to the small number of translators and publishing professionals who are able to work on Turkish texts and, except for a few authors, the limited revenue these titles bring, publishing Turkish translations remains a labour of love for publishers.

One of the main obstacles in this area is that translations from Turkish literature still rely on a ‘push’ strategy from Turkey. Until recently, translation deals were struck mostly through personal contacts, and UK publishers relied on information from their European counterparts, rather than Turkish publishers or literary agents. The Cunda International Workshop for Translators of Turkish Literature and the International Symposium of Translators and Publishers of Turkish Literature, organized by professors from Boğaziçi University, home to Turkey’s first translation department, have provided institutionalized forums for such interaction. The Ministry of Culture TEDA Translation Subvention Project has been set up to promote more translations and has achieved considerable results. Furthermore, a few literary agents in Turkey have focused on selling rights to foreign publishers, and their individual efforts and networking have

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<sup>11</sup> NYRB Classics published two of Yaşar Kemal’s novels in 2005.

proved fruitful. Although these measures have become effective, as we cannot speak of a demand originating from the UK market, they produce limited results.

Consequently, the rich repertoire of modern Turkish literature has been under-represented in the British literary market. Only a few Turkish authors are widely known in Great Britain, and although novels translated from this language are more visible than other genres in the market, Turkish literature generally suffers from invisibility in the UK and Ireland. The cultural insularity and the conservative literary taste prevalent in the British literary culture are hindering the popularity of translated books. And as with other literatures represented in translation in the UK, women writers are under-represented.

In the last five years however, with international opportunities for the promotion of Turkish literature and through the work of literary agents, Turkish literature has been making its way from the very periphery of the UK literary system towards the centre. The last section of the report explains how.

## **4 Publishing**

### **4.1 Bibliography of published translations**

Between the years 1990 and 2010, twenty-two novels, seven short story collections, one collection of essays, four memoirs and fourteen poetry collections have been translated from Turkish and published in the UK. Moreover, three magazines have dedicated individual issues to Turkish literature. See bibliography in Appendix 3.

### **4.2 Publishers, magazines, websites**

The books in the bibliography have been published by the following publishers in the UK and Ireland: Anvil Press Poetry, Arc Publications, Carcanet, Collins Harvill, Comma Press, Conversation International Poetry, Faber and Faber, Marion Boyars, Middlesex University Press, Milet Publishing, Peter Owen, Poetry Ireland, Rockingham Press, Salt Publishing, Saqi Books, Serpent's Tail, Shearsmans Books and Telegram. Among these, the most active are Faber & Faber, Marion Boyars, Milet Publishing, Serpent's Tail, and Shearsmans Books.

Suat Karantay, from the Department of Translation and Interpreting Studies at Boğaziçi University started a website for Turkish literature in English translation in 2001 bearing the title Contemporary Turkish Literature. Currently the website features 449 short stories, poems, plays, chapters from novels and essays by 238 Turkish writers. It has received more than 85,000 hits since it was set up nine years ago.

Although it is not strictly speaking a literary magazine, *Turkish Book Review* is also worth mentioning here. It is an Istanbul-based literary journal dedicated to promoting Turkish literature internationally. It started in 2007 and is published twice a year (from 2010 on, once only). The magazine features book reviews in various fiction and non-fiction genres, author and translator interviews, excerpts from translations and

essays on a diverse range of topics related to Turkish literature. The magazine is sent to 11,000 publishers, literary agents, authors and translators worldwide electronically and 2,500 printed copies are sold at Turkish bookstores and distributed at international book fairs. Contributors include the poet/translator George Messo, the translator Aron Aji, the academic Walter G. Andrews and the author John Smolens.

*Transcript*, Literature Across Frontiers' online magazine of international literature, has dedicated two issues to Turkish literature: Issue 30 featuring translations of new Turkish poetry, and Issue 32, focusing on new Turkish prose. The latter contains short stories and excerpts from novels.

### 4.3 Profiles of Publishers

#### 4.3.1 Faber and Faber

Faber and Faber is a medium-sized literary publisher. They have a strong international fiction and poetry list, with eleven Nobel Prize laureates and six Booker Prize winners. The company was founded in 1929 and has T. S. Eliot among its past editors. Some of the authors/poets that Faber and Faber have published include Ezra Pound, W. H. Auden, James Joyce, William Golding, Lawrence Durrell, Ted Hughes, Sylvia Plath and Philip Larkin.

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

#### 4.3.2 Serpent's Tail

Serpent's Tail is a small publisher, which used to be independent but was acquired by Profile Books in 2007. The publishing house was founded in 1986 'with a commitment to publishing voices neglected by the mainstream'. Fiction in translation forms an important part of their list, which includes the works of three Nobel laureates and an Orange Prize winner. Serpent's Tail is known for its strategy of publishing paperback originals.

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

#### 4.3.3 Shearsman Books

Shearsman Books are an Exeter-based publishing house specializing in poetry.

Website: <http://www.shearsman.com/index.html>

#### 4.3.4 Other UK publishers

Unfortunately, Marion Boyars has gone out of business and Milet Publishing has relocated to the US.

## 5 Dissemination and reception

## 5.1 Dissemination and availability to readers

Translations of Turkish literature are usually published by independent and/or small publishers, and the print runs are usually 2,000 or 3,000. The novels of Orhan Pamuk enjoy more print runs. Because the literature remains marginal, the books are not widely distributed. The books of Orhan Pamuk are an exception again, most medium-sized bookstores, chains or independent bookshops will stock *My Name is Red*, *Snow* and *Istanbul: Memories of a City*. Similarly, most libraries stock *Snow* and *My Name is Red*, and these are also the most popular Pamuk titles for library reading groups.

Well-known Turkish authors appear in author events in the UK. Some of these are organized by the publishers, as in the case of Faber and Faber and Marion Boyars, whereas some are part of literary festivals. Orhan Pamuk was invited to the Edinburgh Book Festival as early as 1996, and Latife Tekin appeared at the Edinburgh Book Festival in 2005. Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak were at the Guardian Hay Literary Festival in 2007. The poets Cevat Çapan and Bejan Matur did a small reading tour following the publication of their collections by Arc Publications. Finally, Elif Shafak appeared at Durham Book Festival in 2010.

Although such events are very important in terms of introducing Turkish authors to the British readership, readers may attend these events with various motivations, with the events not producing the desired result. For example, in the past, when Orhan Pamuk and Elif Shafak were invited for author signings, most readers attending the events were Turkish individuals living in the UK. Translator Ruth Christie remembers an event involving the late poet Nâzım Hikmet's poems in translation: 'The enthusiastic and triumphant audience that packed the Purcell Room a few years ago to hear the poems of Nâzım Hikmet was a rare event, perhaps occasioned more by political passions for a romantic revolutionary than for the poetry itself. A quieter, more reflective poetry can expect a smaller readership, I feel' (Christie, 2010). Strategies to promote contemporary Turkish authors to the British readership include arranging author events with better-known authors writing in the same genres or using similar themes.

Catheryn Kilgarriff of Marion Boyars explains the strategy they implemented to promote Elif Shafak, for instance. The first time they organized an event with her, they held it in North London, with a primarily Turkish audience. This, Shafak found unusual, but the publisher had planned to invite literary editors, who would write reviews on her books. The next time the author came to the UK for a literary festival, it was for the Women in the Middle East Literature Tour in 2006, which included a stop at the Hay Festival. There, Shafak appeared alongside the Norwegian author Åsne Seierstad, the author of *The Bookseller of Kabul*. Kilgarriff explains that the British readership was not familiar with the works of Shafak then, but the popularity of Seierstad gave her visibility as well, because at Hay, 'you have everybody that matters under one tent:' 500 readers on average at each event, many literary editors and international publishing professionals. The tour was in May, and it was in that summer that Shafak's sales went up (Kilgarriff, 2009).

Pete Ayrton of Serpent's Tail also finds this strategy useful:

We would bring authors over and take them to literary festivals. [...] Very often these people are big stars in their country and then they come here and [...] no one's interested; no one knows who they are. [...] I sometimes try to persuade people who run literary festivals that you need to have a famous English - or Scottish, or British - writer introducing the foreign writer [...] and then they will get a good attendance, but they often don't want to do that. Otherwise it's very difficult (Ayrton, 2009).

This is in some ways similar to having established British literary figures write introductions to translations from Turkish: for example, John Berger wrote a preface for Latife Tekin's *Berji Kristin*, A. S. Byatt introduced Cevat Çapan's poetry collection, *Where Are You, Susie Petschek?* and Maureen Freely wrote an introduction to Bejan Matur's *In the Temple of a Patient God*.

One thing to bear in mind here is that only authors who speak English are invited to literary festivals in the UK. 'It is a major obstacle if the author doesn't speak English' says Ayrton, 'There's not much point [in] bringing an author to this country if they don't speak English because, [...] certainly to be on the media - to be on the radio [...] - you need to speak English' (Ayrton, 2009).

Orhan Pamuk has been a guest speaker in several BBC4 programmes. His *My Name is Red* has also been dramatized by BBC and broadcast in 2008. However, this dramatization is not commercially available.

Translations published by UK publishers are usually distributed in the US, for example, Faber and Faber publish co-editions with Knopf, who distribute Orhan Pamuk novels there. Marion Boyars books are also sent over to their US partner. Moreover, there are US publishers active in publishing translated Turkish fiction and poetry as well: Texas Tech University Press, University of Texas Press, Southmoor Studios, Talisman House Publishers, Syracuse University Press and Milet, since it moved to the US. However, translations published in the US do not always make their way to UK booksellers, although they are mostly available in online retailers.

In the US, as in the UK, sales figures are limited. Although Orhan Pamuk remains the most widely read Turkish author in the US, Walter G. Andrews believes translations of Turkish literature are not visible enough in the US market:

The harsh facts of the matter are these: In 2006, for example, 291,920 books were published in the U.S. In a good year perhaps two or three translations of Turkish literature will appear and perhaps 10 will be already in print. This is a tiny drop in an ocean of books. The vast majority of readers will know nothing about Turkish literature beyond some of them having heard of Orhan Pamuk. There is no reason whatsoever why they would choose to buy a translation of Turkish literature given all the choices they have (Andrews, 2008: 56).

## 5.2 Media and critical reception

Translations of Turkish literature are reviewed by literary critics contributing to the literature sections of major newspapers and prestigious literary magazines: *The Guardian*, *The Observer*, *The Independent*, *The Times Literary Supplement*, the *London Review of Books* etc. The reviews usually praise the authors for the literary merits of their books, not always mentioning the translation, as is the case with other reviews of translations. However, among all the translators, Maureen Freely is the one who enjoys the most positive attention, which might be partly due to the fact that she is a novelist herself and is part of the literary community.

Güneli Gün's translations *The Black Book* and *The New Life* did not elicit positive feedback from British reviewers (Adil, 2006: 131). Maureen Freely explains that part of the reason was that Gün used American English and had an idiosyncratic style in her translations (Freely, 2010).

Certain cultural and political issues remain popular among reviewers of Turkish literature, leading Alev Adil to conclude that the literary elite in Britain force a burden of political signification upon Turkish writers (Adil, 2006: 120). Freedom of expression is a theme picked up by some, as Orhan Pamuk, Elif Shafak and Perihan Mağden have been tried under Article 301 of the Penal Code for publicly denigrating Turkishness or the institutions of the Turkish Republic. Especially in Pamuk reviews, critics like to mention the fact that Pamuk now lives in New York after receiving death threats.

The other, more prominent element is representation. Some reviews tend to emphasize how the works of contemporary Turkish novelists depict Turkey and Turkish society and culture, and capture the Turkish identity. Reviews of Orhan Pamuk's books, for example, praise the physical descriptions, with an emphasis on exoticism. Adam Shatz, in his review in the *London Review of Books*, explains that Pamuk's depictions of Istanbul - 'as a palimpsest, a maze of signs that can never be fully deciphered - accounts for much of the West's fascination with Pamuk' (Shatz, 2010: 15).

Philip Hensher, in a review of *My Name is Red* for *The Spectator*, credits Pamuk's Orientalist descriptions by quoting a passage from the book:

It is utterly unlike [...] the Western traditional historical novel or the intellectual thriller. [...] Oddly, the Western tradition it does draw from is a sumptuous orientalism. Professor Edward Said has taught us all to be rather snooty about French paintings of harems, and perhaps it takes a Turkish novelist to demonstrate that orientalism is, in reality, one of the richest of literary modes, even if it has nothing to say about the historical reality. Pamuk seizes the potential of orientalism with magnificent gusto:

*This area, so often described by my Enishte and others who had visited the palace, lay before me like a Heavenly garden of unequalled beauty. I regarded the peacocks roaming through the greenery, the gold cups chained to splashing drinking fountains, and the Grand Vizier's heralds robed in silk who seemed to amble about without touching the ground, and I felt the thrill of being able to serve my Sovereign.*

It is a wonderful novel, dreamy, passionate and august, exotic in the most original and exciting way (Hensher, 2001).

The last sentence of this review has been reproduced on the blurb of the Faber and Faber edition of the book.

Reviews treat Pamuk's novels as social commentaries, almost invariably. For example, Sarah Smith, in her review of *The Museum of Innocence* for the *Literary Review*, writes: 'This is a cornucopia of a work, as rich in its details of the life of his home city as the memoir *Istanbul*, which it in some ways mirrors; as deep in literary conceit as the bestselling *My Name is Red*, and as caustic in social commentary as the extraordinary *Snow*' (Smith 2010: 69).

Before the Faber and Faber edition of *The Museum of Innocence* was available, *The Economist* published a review of the USA edition. The review, which bears the tired and commonplace title 'Turkish Delight', draws attention to its local themes:

Pamuk [...] has conjured up a circle of characters who are driven by anxieties about Turkishness and modernity, authenticity and imitation. The people in his book aspire to Western mores in a place they feel to be peripheral and second-rate. These tensions, both secret and destructive, govern sexual passion and convention, and the possibility of happiness. [...]

Although the Istanbul bourgeoisie holds engagement parties in the Hilton hotel, and old money sniffs at "parvenus from the provinces" with their headscarved wives, the sexual revolution has not yet arrived. In a society that is obsessed with women preserving their virginity until a marriage is at least in prospect, it is notable that both women yield to Kemal, though at some cost to themselves (*Economist*, 2009: 103).

Translation scholar Saliha Paker argues that, while a few decades ago comments on the Turkish identity focused on the Turkish identity as 'Oriental', now they articulate a liminality, usually expressed as 'the Turk suspended between the East and the West'. Paker argues that essentialism still persists, as these representations operate on an 'either/or level' and leave no room for agency on the part of the Turkish identity (Paker, 2004: 6).

Adam Schatz, in his review, comments about the characters in Pamuk's novels: 'Galip [the protagonist of *The Black Book*] is one of the luckier characters in Pamuk, transported to the shores of a stable identity [...]; most are left hanging, swinging between East and West, between the mosque and the mall' (Schatz, 2010: 16).

Although successful Turkish authors are compared to the masters of world literature, like Pamuk to Mann and Dostoevsky and Tekin to Marquez and Beckett, Turkish literature has mostly been received with reference to a 'local' context, as opposed to the common perception of the French and Russian classics, for example, as exploring 'universal themes'. In an interview for the *Paris Review*, Orhan Pamuk points out to

this situation: ‘When Proust writes about love, he is seen as someone talking about universal love. Especially at the beginning, when I wrote about love, people would say that I was writing about Turkish love’ (*Paris Review*, 2005: 140).

Writer Elif Shafak also sees the reception of Turkish literature as restricted by binarisms, but she remains hopeful: ‘The amount of translated works in the West is unfortunately still too little. And my feeling is that sometimes Turkish literature is seen as neither too “exotic/Eastern” nor too “Western”. But I believe that precisely because we are on the threshold we have so much to offer. I think we need to build more bridges’ (*Journal of Turkish Literature*, 2009).

There is a small circle of reviewers working with a collaborative ethos to promote Turkish literature in the UK. In this circle we can name Boyd Tonkin, literary editor of *The Independent*, Maureen Freely, who is a literary journalist as well as translator, Moris Farhi, a British writer of Turkish origin, and Alev Adil, a British poet and academic of Turkish Cypriot origin. These cultural agents provide nuanced commentaries on Turkish literature in English translation.

## **6 Policy and public / private support for literature in translation**

### **6.1 Public and private sector support from UK and Ireland cultural institutions**

It is possible to obtain funding from Arts Council England for translation projects. For example Latife Tekin’s *Dear Shameless Death* (Marion Boyars, 2001) was published with ACE funding. To date, there are no institutions in the UK dedicated to the promotion of Turkish literature, but the inauguration in November 2010 of the Yunus Emre Institute in London, modelled on cultural institutes of European countries such as Cervantes or Goethe, promises a change in this respect.

### **6.2 Public and private sector support for translation and dissemination of literature from the country of origin**

In 2005, the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism initiated the TEDA Translation Subvention Project, aimed at promoting Turkish literature abroad. On the Ministry website, the purpose of the project is explained as ‘to merge Turkish cultural, artistic and literary spirit with the intellectual circles abroad, and also to orient people to the sources of Turkish culture, art and literature’ ([www.kultur.gov.tr](http://www.kultur.gov.tr)).

Applications to this programme have to be filed by the publishers who are asked to submit a sample translation. A committee of experts considers the applications and makes recommendations for funding, based on the quality of the translated book and translation, and the standard of the publisher’s list. The TEDA committee does not have a say on who should translate the book, nor are they involved in setting the remuneration rate. The language and country of publication is also a factor taken into consideration.

Walter G. Andrews, a US scholar on Turkish literature, describes the process through which this project was realised:

Ever since I began working on the field [...] the Turkish government has supported translation to some degree. But these were mostly projects without a program, without any means for assuring the quality of the translations or any apparent thought about how the results would get into the hands of the readers. [...] In 2004, however, things changed dramatically. The T.R. Ministry of Culture, under the leadership of the then-undersecretary Prof. Mustafa Isen, began talking about a major initiative to support the translation and study of Turkish literature. Those of us who work with Turkish literature in the U.S. were interested but sceptical. But later that year, Prof. Isen came to a gathering of translators and teachers of Turkish literature held at the University of Washington in Seattle, and much to our amazement, asked our advice about how to make a high-quality translation program succeed. We were even more amazed when the TEDA program was announced and the guidelines for subsidies turned out to be substantially in agreement with our suggestions (Andrews, 2008: 55).

The project has had considerable success, although not particularly with British publishers. As the chart below shows, the project has not received many applications from Britain. Britain is represented here with 15 publishing projects that received the subsidy by the end of 2010 (1.8 %), whereas the figure for the USA, which is comparable to the UK in terms of language and culture, is 40, almost threefold. The high number of subsidies awarded to German publishers is due to the fact that there is a sizeable Turkish community in Germany as well as to the strong tradition of literary translation in German-speaking countries. Some of these subsidies have been claimed by publishing houses run by Turkish-Germans in Germany. However, the UK figure can be compared with that of France - 32 - as a large publishing industry with access to internal publishing subsidies.

## Teda Allocations

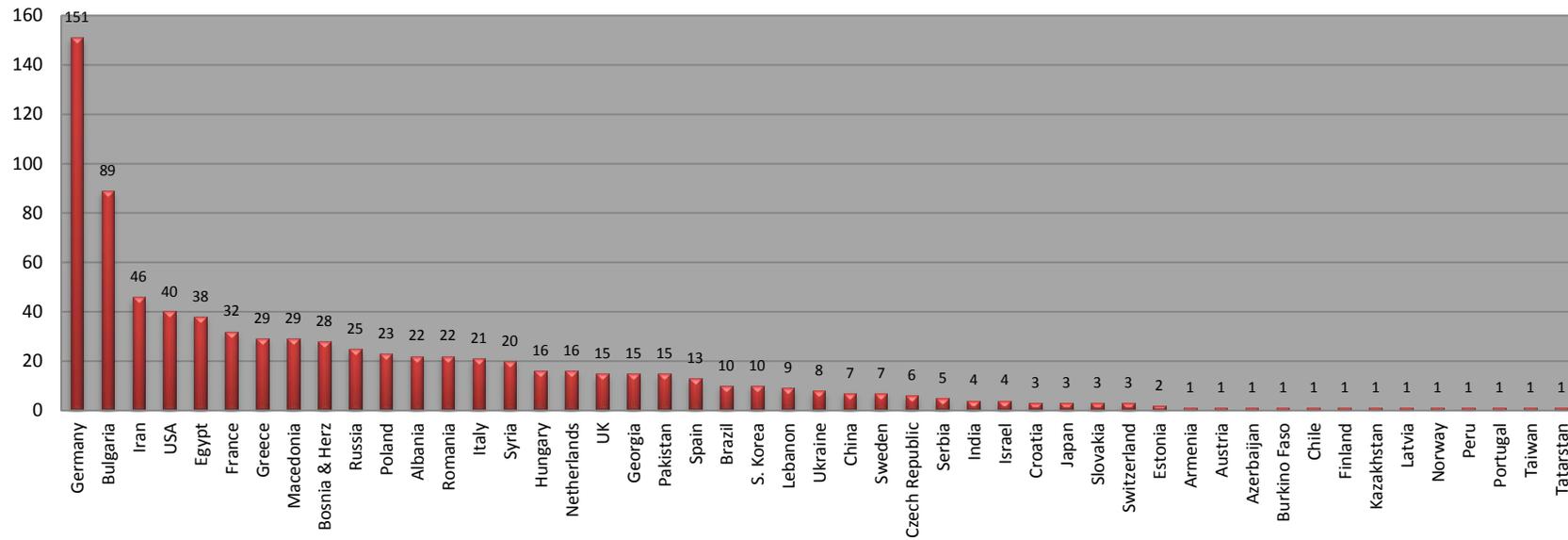


Table. 1 TEDA Allocation Chart: The number of translation projects subsidized by the Turkish Ministry of Culture between 2005 and 2010, according to recipient country (data from the TEDA website).

Nevertheless, this project has created awareness among British publishing houses and seven literary translation projects have been funded through TEDA: Orhan Kemal's *The Idle Years & My Father's House* (Peter Owen) Latife Tekin's *Swords of Ice* (Marion Boyars) Perihan Mağden's *2 Girls* (Serpent's Tail) Elif Shafak's *The Gaze* (Marion Boyars) Feyyaz Kayacan Fergar's *Mrs. Valley's War* (Rockingham Press), İlhan Berk's *The Book of Things* (Salt Publishing) *The Book of Istanbul: A City in Short Fiction*, a short story collection edited by Jim Hinks and Gul turner (Comma Press). Seagull Books (Plays from Turkey, collective) has also received financial assistance and Peter Owen (*The Lost Word*, Oya Baydar) has received the subvention for a second time this year.

Moreover, TEDA has decided to support the following titles in 2011: *Son Tramvay (The Last Tram)* by Nedim Gürsel (Comma Press, trans. Aron Aji) and *Kitapçı Dükkanı (The Bookshop)* by Esmahan Akyol (Bitter Lemon Press, trans. Ruth Whitehouse).

Through the work of Turkish literary agents, like Nermin Mollaoğlu (Kalem Literary Agency), Amy Spangler and Dilek Akdemir (Anatolia Lit) and Barbaros Altuğ (Istanbul Literary Agency), British houses are better acquainted with contemporary Turkish literature. Simon Smith of Peter Owen Publishing explains that the availability of funding is no longer such an obstacle for translation projects (Smith, 2009).

The TEDA project is complemented by a biennial symposium on translation of Turkish literature, organized in cooperation with Boğazici University since 2007, to which a range of literary, translation and publishing professionals are invited from Europe and the rest of the world. The symposium has also served as a forum for translation deals. Smith explains the process through which they acquired Oya Baydar's *The Lost Word*:

I met [Nermin Mollaoğlu] at the TEDA Symposium [...] and asked what she had and what might be appropriate for us [...] she felt that Oya Baydar was appropriate for our list, effectively, and also something that would work in English. [...] It was her material but we did have a German translation, which we have read in full, and had a very detailed report on. [...] It sounded like the kind of thing we might be able to get an English language readership interested in (Smith, 2009).

Peter Owen was able to get a TEDA subvention for this title, and they found a translator through the agent, Mollaoğlu, which shows that such events and the activity of literary agents play a key role in the promotion of Turkish literature in the UK.

## 7 Translation

### 7.1 Translators

There are 28 translators who have translated or co-translated at least one book for a UK publishing house since 1990: Amy Spangler, Aron Aji, Brendan Freely, Cevat Çapan, Clifford Endres, Damian Croft, Erdağ Gökner, Elizabeth Maslen, George Messo, Güneli Gün, Kenneth Dakan, Leland Bardwell, Maureen Freely, Mel Kenne, Michael Hulse, Müge Göçek, Pelin Arner, Richard Hamer, Richard McKane, Ruth Christie, Saliha Parker, Talat Sait Halman, Taner Baybars, Thilda Kemal, Selçuk Berilgen, Selhan Endres, Ruth Whitehouse

and Victoria Holbrook. New names are being added to this list in 2010: Stephanie Ateş, who is translating Oya Baydar's *The Lost Word* for Peter Owen, and Alex Dawe, who is co-translating Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *The Time Regulation Institute* with Maureen Freely for Penguin.

However, among these, only Maureen Freely, George Messo, Ruth Christie, Saliha Paker and Kenneth Dakan may be considered active translators in today's translation market. Among these, Saliha Paker is a native speaker of Turkish, and the others speak Turkish as a second/foreign language. Among the non-native translators, only Ruth Christie has had a formal education in Turkish, whereas the others have learned the language only through living in Turkey. We will examine the profiles of three translators, Maureen Freely, Ruth Christie and George Messo in detail.

## 7.2 Translators profile

### 7.2.1 Maureen Freely

Maureen Freely is the translator of *Snow*, *The Black Book* and *The Museum of Innocence*, all written by Orhan Pamuk and published by Faber and Faber in the UK. Freely is a novelist herself, and specializes in fiction in translation. She has also translated a collection of essays and a memoir by Pamuk, and a memoir by Fethiye Çetin, for Verso. She is currently translating Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *The Time Regulation Institute* for Penguin with Alex Dawe.

Freely doesn't have professional training in translation; however, she has a degree in English and Comparative Literature. She learned Turkish as she was living in Istanbul between the ages of 8 and 18 and speaks the language as a second language.

Her main publisher, Faber and Faber, buys titles together with Knopf in the US, which means that her translations of Pamuk are published at the same time in the US by Knopf. Freely was first contacted by the author for the translation of *Snow*, when he had problems with his previous translator. She also retranslated *The Black Book* after Güneli Gün and wrote a translator's afterword to explain her translation strategies.

The biggest challenge in translating Turkish into English for her is the linguistic differences between the two languages:

English, as we know, likes a linear logic. [...] It wants to know who did what, and if at all possible, when, where and why. The word 'is' lies at the heart of the equation, alongside the word 'has.' The road between subject and object is paved with prepositions. But Turkish is lean and double-jointed, arching effortlessly from the active to the passive voice, delighting in nuances, dispensing with definite articles, stringing suffix to suffix to create sparkling mots justes that would need eight or nine or even a dozen words in English, and offering a tantalising array of clauses that do not link up until the sentence reaches its last syllable (Freely, 2006: 146-147).

Freely explains that she personally knew her editor at Faber and Faber before working with them on Pamuk novels, so she has enjoyed a supportive relationship with them (Freely, 2010). Because Pamuk is an

internationally acclaimed author, he has much power over editorial decisions, and Freely explains that the editors at Faber have been happy to implement his decisions. However, for the same reason, Freely remembers that there has been pressure to deliver the translations as quickly as possible so that the books would be available to readers sooner.

She signed her contracts with Knopf, who shared costs with Faber and Faber. She received flat fees, calculated according to the number of words to be translated. Her translations are often used as a basis for translations into other languages where no translator able to translate directly from Turkish is available. She has not received any payment for indirect translations using English as their source language.

When Orhan Pamuk was tried for denigrating Turkishness<sup>12</sup>, he was under the spotlight both in the Turkish and international media. The publishers in the UK received numerous questions about their author, and they did not know exactly how to react to this attention. Freely explains that she advised the editors at Faber and Faber during this difficult period (Freely, 2010).

Freely explains that her ideas on translation are informed by her work as a novelist, journalist and literary critic (Freely 2006: 145-146). As a writer, she attaches great importance to voice and rhythm. Consequently, these are the elements that she is careful about in her translations. She describes herself as someone 'translating by ear' (ibid., 148).

Adam Shatz, in his comprehensive review of Pamuk's work in English for the *London Review of Books*, explains how Freely's translations have rendered Pamuk's fiction accessible for the English-speaking readership:

Pamuk writes long, ornate sentences [...] In English, especially in Maureen Freely's translations (she is herself a novelist), Pamuk's prose is pared down and simplified, given a pleasingly legible surface that makes it look at home in the *New Yorker*. There are difficulties to contend with in the English translations, but they are seldom at the level of the sentence (Shatz, 2010: 15).

According to Freely, the biggest obstacle in the way of Turkish literature in the UK is the lack of interest, but she is optimistic: 'The lack of interest had entirely to do with the place of Turkey in the world during most of the twentieth century, most especially during the pre-Özal years. Recent political, social, economic changes, along with the rise of tourism in Turkey have led to a re-awakening interest' (2010).

Freely herself has received very positive feedback from literary critics for her work. She is active in the Translators Association's Executive Committee, and she has also served on the jury of the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize.

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<sup>12</sup> In 2005, in an interview for a Swiss magazine Pamuk said, 'Thirty thousand Kurds have been killed here, and a million Armenians. And almost nobody dares to mention that. So I do.' He was subsequently prosecuted under Article 301 of the Penal Code, which dictates that anyone who explicitly insults the Turkish nation, the Republic of Turkey or its main institutions shall be punishable by imprisonment.

### 7.2.2 Ruth Christie

Ruth Christie has co-translated several books from Turkish into English for UK publishers: two novels (*Berji Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills* and *Songs My Mother Never Taught Me*), one short story collection (*Mrs. Valley's War*) and three poetry collections; *Voices of Memory: Selected Poems of Oktay Rifat*, *Beyond the Walls: Selected Poems* (of Nâzım Hikmet) and *Poems of Oktay Rifat*. She has also translated Bejan Matur's poetry - *In the Temple of a Patient God*.

Christie holds a degree in English Language and Literature from the University of St Andrews. She learned Turkish as she lived in Istanbul for nine years teaching English. Later she studied the language at SOAS, where the language training focused on grammar.

She had been interested in translation since her school days, when she had to translate Latin and Greek texts. She thinks that 'such practice, plus a close knowledge of one's mother tongue and a thorough grounding in the structures and culture of the source language, with easy access to a friendly and literate Turk, is one of the best basic training in translation that anyone can have' (Christie, 2010).

The translation projects that she has been involved in have usually been initiated by contacts in the literary circle and she has enjoyed the collaborative translation process. She has found all her publishers, with the exception of Marion Boyars, to be courteous and helpful. In particular, Anvil Press took great trouble with the publication of the Turkish poet Oktay Rifat, and according to her, Peter Jay was 'a wonderful editor'. This was in complete contrast to the publisher of *Berji Kristin* who ignored proofreading by the translators with the result that mistakes reappeared in the second edition. The translators were not entirely happy with the publisher's initial attitude to the work, which seemed to lack interest, although subsequent good reviews led to further publications and the introduction of a new writer to the UK readership.

She has mostly received flat fees from publishers - which have been paid from grants, and once, supplemented by the author herself - and has been receiving royalties from Anvil.

Unfortunately, Christie is not very optimistic about an enthusiastic reception of Turkish literature in the UK: 'Perhaps we are still a very insular country, when you realize that most translated works are either strong-meat thrillers (e.g. by the late Steig Larsson or Henning Mankell) or books by Nobel Prize winners, and that publishers are constrained by rising costs, limited grants and incurious readers, what hope is there for translated literature?' (Christie, 2010). She thinks more grants and more well-trained translators could help introduce more titles to English-language readers.

### 7.2.3 George Messo

George Messo specializes in poetry, and he has translated several collections: *A Leaf About to Fall: Selected Poems*, *Madrigals* and *The Book of Things*, all by İlhan Berk, and *İkinci Yeni: The Turkish Avant-Garde* and *From This Bridge: Contemporary Turkish Women Poets*, by various poets. Messo himself is a poet and editor, and he has worked for small, independent publishers who specialize in poetry.

Messo studied Philosophy at various British universities and has lived in Turkey since the late 1990s. He has not received any formal training in the Turkish language. He has a special interest in İlhan Berk's poetry and has translated a considerable amount of his work. Although relatively few, reviews on his translations have been on the whole positive. He is currently based in Saudi Arabia, which makes it difficult for him to keep up to date with recent developments in the UK book market.

Messo prefers working with editors he knows either personally or through their work, and is happy with the way his translations have been treated:

Trust is a primary consideration for me and, of course, an admiration for the work done by the press. I want to feel that a book really belongs on an editor's list, that it's fully supported in its place. I've been very lucky to work with two of the finest editors in British poetry publishing, Tony Frazer at Shearsman and Chris Hamilton-Emery at Salt. And again with Arc and Conversation Paperpress. These are independent editors putting their own money into books that they not only like but that they want to see being read in Britain today. They take huge artistic and financial risks, which demands a steady vision and a heap of courage (2010).

Messo has applied for TEDA funding twice, and his publisher was able to receive subvention once for *The Book of Things*. This book has been his most successful book, which has also been shortlisted for the Popescu European Poetry Translation Prize in 2007.

Messo is aware that there is a very small market for translated poetry in the UK. However, he believes that there are enough dedicated readers to sustain the effort of translators. He sees his role as a cultural ambassador who could be 'instrumental in stimulating new appetites and interests' (2010). He thinks Turkish literature could benefit from more reviews and publicity.

### 7.3 Language and literary translation training opportunities

Turkish remains a marginal language in the UK, in the sense that there are few speakers of Turkish as a foreign language, and interest to learning it is limited. Turkey is a popular destination among British tourists; therefore, there is an interest in Turkish culture and history, but only of the ephemeral and touristic type.

There are no institutions offering training in Turkish-English translation in the UK. However, the University of Oxford, School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London), King's College London (University of London) and the University of Manchester currently offer undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in Turkish. These courses each teach five to ten students per year, which is not a sufficient output for new translators to emerge.

The University of Oxford offers training in Turkish as part of its BA in Oriental Studies. Between 1989 and 2009, sixteen students graduated from this programme with Turkish as the main language and ten with Turkish as a subsidiary language. Turkish is taught also as part of the BA in European and Middle Eastern

Languages. Between 2000-2009, seven students graduated with Turkish as the Middle Eastern language component of this programme.

At postgraduate level, the university provides Turkish training as part of the MPhil degree in Modern Middle Eastern Studies, which saw ten students graduate with Turkish as the language component of their degree between 1998 and 2009.

There has been a slight increase in overall undergraduate demand for Turkish over the last two decades, with graduation peaks in 2000-1 and 2006-9. The number of undergraduates currently on the course taking Turkish as a main or subsidiary language is six, and two are expected to start in 2010. While the numbers of students taking Turkish are unpredictable from year to year, there are currently three students on the course.

The BA and MA programmes offer modules on translation, and, according to Laurent Mignon of the Oriental Institute, there are a few graduates who are currently working as translators in the civil service (2010).

At SOAS, there are currently six or seven students looking to graduate from the BA degree, and five or six students taking the MA. The Turkish Studies programme here offers optional translation modules at undergraduate and postgraduate levels, which accept five or six students on average. Bengisu Rona of SOAS explains that several of their alumni have translated novels, short stories and plays (2010).

The British centre for Literary Translation offers summer schools for translation in various languages. Although there have not been any opportunities for Turkish yet, it may well be an option in the future.

Saliha Paker, professor of Translation Studies at Boğaziçi and Okan Universities, set up the Cunda International Workshop for Translators of Turkish Literature - CWTTL - In 2006. This takes place on the island of Cunda in Turkey, and the programme is funded by the Ministry of Culture and supported by Boğaziçi, Harvard and Koç Universities and since 2010 also by the European-funded programme Literature Across Frontiers. The cooperation with LAF has resulted in the opening up of the workshop to translators translating also into other languages; the workshop however remains primarily a forum for translators of Turkish literature into English, which is considered to be a key language in dissemination of Turkish literature abroad.

The annual workshop has invited British and American translators who have worked on the novels, short stories and poetry of various Turkish authors including Murathan Mungan, Latife Tekin and Hasan Ali Toptaş and has encouraged many beginners to start and continue translating works of Turkish literature.

#### **7.4 Translators' conditions of work and translation quality monitoring**

Since Turkish is not spoken widely in the UK, translations from Turkish are copy-edited by publishing professionals with no knowledge of the source language. However, if the book in question is by a contemporary author who speaks English, the author might be involved in the copy-editing process,

together with the translators (or co-translators). In some cases, copy-editors ask their personal contacts who speak the source language to revise the translation and maybe make recommendations.

The rates of pay and terms of contract vary, although the Translators Association makes recommendations on both. Among the translators working in this field, only Maureen Freely is a member of the UK Translators Association, and she currently serves on its Executive Committee.

In 1990, Viktoria Holbrook's translation *The White Castle* (Orhan Pamuk) was awarded the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize, and, in 2005, both Maureen Freely's *Snow* (Orhan Pamuk) and Müge Göçek's *The Flea Palace* (Elif Shafak) were long-listed for the prize. George Messo's *A Leaf About to Fall* was shortlisted for the Popescu European Poetry Translation Prize in 2007. Literary prizes are certainly motivating for translators.

## 8 Conclusions and Recommendations

The biggest obstacle to the promotion of literature from Turkish seems to be cultural insularity on the part of the British readers. This argument seems plausible especially when we take into account the limited appeal of the TEDA translation subvention project in the UK.

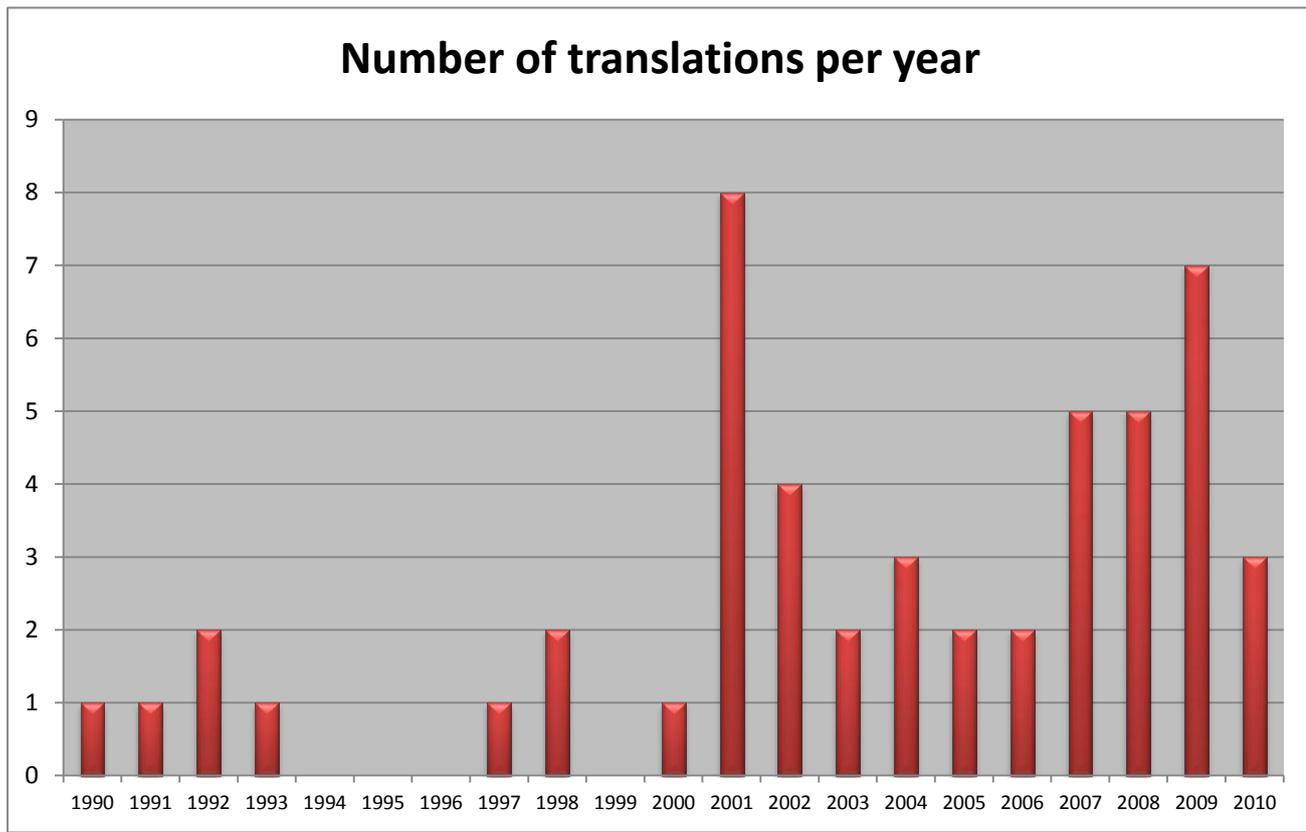
Furthermore, within cultural insularity, linguistic conservatism seems to play a large part, especially when we take into account the fact that novels and travel writing set in foreign countries but written in English do not have a problem finding readers. Style is a very important element in British literary culture and readers seem to be averse to texts that have gone through the linguistic process of translation. In addition, Turkish proper names and culture-specific concepts are not readily accessible for English-speaking readers, and these factors combined appear to make Turkish books in translation 'demanding reads' in this literary culture.

However, there has been a new and promising trend since 2005, the year when the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism initiated the TEDA Translation Subvention Project.

An equally important milestone was Orhan Pamuk's receipt of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2006. This received extensive media coverage worldwide, as numerous newspapers and literary magazines quoted the Nobel Academy's assertion that Pamuk 'in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city, has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures.'

This prestigious award might be said to have a slight knock-on effect for Turkish novelists as well. Since 2006, twenty works of literature have been translated into English and published by British publishers, and five more (Oya Baydar's *The Lost Word*, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar's *The Time Regulation Institute*, a drama collection, *Plays from Turkey*, Nedim Gürsel's *The Last Tram* and Esmahan Akyol's *The Bookshop*) are currently being translated. According to the chart below, the numbers have gone up steadily since 2006. Compared to the four-year period before 2006, the figure has more than doubled in the four years since

then, i.e. from nine to twenty. Moreover, the British publishers who represent Turkish fiction have become more varied, including new houses like Peter Owen, Telegram, Penguin, Saqi Books and Seagull Books.



**Table 2. Translations from Turkish into English, 1990 - 2010**

More recently, in 2008, Turkey was the guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair, which is the biggest industry event worldwide for publishing. The Turkish Ministry of Culture and the Publishers Association organized many panels to discuss aspects of Turkish literature and invited various authors for readings. Booklets giving overviews of modern Turkish literature were distributed, and international publishers met their Turkish counterparts in the guest of honour pavilion and the Rights Centre.

Müge Sökmen, the organizer of the Publishers Association’s presence at the Book Fair explains the benefits of being the Guest of Honour:

[Before,] when we went over to talk with publishers [...] they would say ‘Oh he’s too modern’ ‘Too Western’ or ‘I already had a Turk last year’ as if all the Turkish authors were one and the same, as if they all had [a certain message to give]. [...] So FBF was a really a big opportunity for us to be able to show that there was a variety of authors from Turkey, which should be read as Literature and which is not less (Sökmen, 2009).

Sökmen goes on to explain that previously European publishers usually consulted each other’s lists about Turkish novels, and FBF 2008 for the first time gave Turkish publishers the opportunity to address European publishers directly. This industry event drew attention to Turkish literature internationally, therefore for

the first time Turkey was the subject of media coverage more for its literature than its politics (Sökmen, 2009).

All of these factors helped change European publishers' approach to Turkey. Turkish literature has been removed from the Orientalist literary ghetto to which it was previously confined. Turkish publishing professionals confirm and welcome this new approach.

Peter Owen's approach to the novel they have recently acquired exemplifies this new attitude. From editor Simon Smith's comments, we might infer that as well as being aware of the specific cultural context of the novel, they are also interested in the more universal themes explored, rather than pursuing any local colour. They are mainly aiming at a cosmopolitan readership, rather than people with a touristic interest in Turkey:

I think what appealed to us about the Oya Baydar book was [that] it's not exclusively Turkish, in the sense that it takes place in other parts of Europe, as well as in Turkey, it includes large elements of the Turkish-Kurdish situation [...] The whole point of the book, and certainly the book's title is the metaphor for the lack of dialogue between peoples, as well as an individual losing his writer's voice. [...] That seemed to be something we could work on to get people to look at it.

[...] It's a hook that we can hang a book on and something that people might recognise and think they want to learn more about. [...] Oya Baydar seems to be in a tradition [...] of dissident voices from the 70's and 80's perhaps, which is again something that people with a liberal conscience in Western Europe might pick up on. [...] That sort of gives it an added weight, without it perhaps being [...] too specifically Turkish, if you like. [...] It's a way in, for people from the outside (Smith, 2009).

The prejudices against translated literature will take time to overcome. If more British students are encouraged to take foreign languages at school, there could be a better awareness and appreciation of foreign languages in the reading public, which would hopefully banish conceptions of literary translation as an impossible task. More speakers of foreign languages would also help more people to seriously consider translation as a profession, a side job or a hobby if not a full-time job.

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## 10 Appendix: Bibliography of works translated from Turkish into English (UK & Ireland) 1990 - 2010

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Novel	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>The White Castle</i>	<i>Beyaz Kale</i>	Victoria Holbrook		London		1990	1990: Carcanet, hardback 2001, 2009: Faber and Faber, paperback
Novel	Yaşar Kemal	<i>To Crush the Serpent</i>	<i>Yılanı Öldürseler</i>	Thilda Kemal		London		1991	Collins Harvill
Poetry	Collective	<i>Modern Turkish Poetry</i>		Collective	Feyyaz Kayacan	Ware		1992	The Rockingham Press
Poetry	Oktay Rifat	<i>Voices of Memory: Selected Poems of Oktay Rifat</i>		Ruth Christie and Richard McKane		Ware		1993	Rockingham Press & Yapı Kredi Yayınları
Novel	Tekin, Latife	<i>Berci Kristin: Tales from the Garbage Hills</i>	<i>Berci Kristin: Çöp Masalları</i>	Ruth Christie and Saliha Paker		London		1993	1993: Marion Boyars hardback, 1996: Marion Boyars paperback
Novel	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>The Black Book</i>	<i>Kara Kitap</i>	Güneli Gün		London		1994	1994: Faber and Faber, paperback 2006: Faber and Faber (retranslation by Maureen Freely) paperback

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Novel	Yaşar Kemal	<i>Salman the Solitary</i>	<i>Yağmuncuk Kuşu</i>	Thilda Kemal		London		1997	Collins Harvill
Poetry	Aktunç, Hulki	<i>Twelfth Song</i>		Collective		Dublin		1998	Poetry Ireland
Poetry	Müldür, Lale	<i>Water Music</i>		Collective		Dublin		1998	Poetry Ireland
Novel	Atasü, Erendiz	<i>The Other Side of the Mountain</i>	<i>Dağın Öteki Yüzü</i>	Elizabeth Maslen and Erendiz Atasü		London		2000	Milet Publishing Ltd
Poetry	Çapan, Cevat	<i>Where Are You, Susie Petschek? The Poems of Cevat Çapan</i>		Michael Hulse and Cevat Çapan		Todmorden		2001	Arc Publications
Short stories	Füruzan	<i>A Summer Full of Love</i>	<i>Sevda Dolu Bir Yaz</i>	Damian Croft		London		2001	Milet Publishing Ltd
Short stories	İlgaz, Rifat	<i>Fourth Company</i>	<i>Dördüncü Bölük</i>	Damian Croft		London		2001	Milet Publishing Ltd
Short Stories	İzgü, Muzaffer	<i>Radikal Niyazi Bey</i>	<i>Radikal Niyazi Bey</i> (bilingual)	Damian Croft		London		2001	Milet Publishing Ltd
Short stories	Uzuner, Buket	<i>A Cup of Turkish Coffee</i>	<i>Bir Fincan Kahve</i> (bilingual)	Pelin Arner		London		2001	Milet Publishing Ltd
Novel	Tekin, Latife	<i>Dear Shameless Death</i>	<i>Sevgili Arsız Ölüm</i>	Saliha Parker and Mel Kenne		London	ACE	2001	Marion Boyars

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Poetry	Yashin, Mehmet	<i>Don't Go Back to Kyrenia</i>		Taner Baybars		London		2001	Middlesex University Press
Poetry	Collective	<i>Agenda: Modern Turkish Poetry (vol. 38, no. 3-4)</i>		Collective	William Cookson, Patricia McCarthy	Sussex		2001-2002	
Poetry	Nâzım Hikmet	<i>Beyond the Walls: Selected Poems</i>		Ruth Christie, Richard McKane and Talat Sait Halman		London		2002	Anvil Press Poetry
Short Stories	Aziz Nesin	<i>Out of the Way! Socialism's Coming</i>	<i>Sosyalizm Geliyor Savulun</i>	Damian Croft		London		2002	Milet Publishing Ltd
Novel	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>My Name is Red</i>	<i>Benim Adım Kırmızı</i>	Erdağ Göknar		London		2002	2002: Faber and Faber, paperback 2008: Faber and Faber, audiobook
Novel	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>The New Life</i>	<i>Yeni Hayat</i>	Güneli Gün		London		2002	
Novel	Mağden, Perihan	<i>The Messenger Boy Murders</i>	<i>Haberci Çocuk Cinayetleri</i>	Richard Hamer		London		2003	Milet Publishing Ltd

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Memoir	Zeybek Güzel, Asiye	<i>Asiye's Story</i>	<i>Asiye İşkencede: Bir Tecavüz Öyküsü</i>	Richard McKane		London		2003	Saqi Books
Poetry	Matur, Bejan	<i>In the Temple of a Patient God</i>		Ruth Christie		Todmorden		2004	Arc Publications
Novel	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>Snow</i>	<i>Kar</i>	Maureen Freely		London		2004	2004: Faber and Faber, hardback 2005: Faber and Faber, paperback 2010: Faber and Faber, paperback
Novel	Shafak, Elif	<i>The Flea Palace</i>	<i>Bit Palas</i>	Müge Göçek		London		2004	Marion Boyars
Novel	Mağden, Perihan	<i>2 Girls</i>	<i>İki Genç Kızın Romanı</i>	Brendan Freely		London	EU & TEDA	2005	Serpent's Tail
Memoir	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>Istanbul: Memories of a City</i>	<i>Istanbul: Hatıralar ve Şehir</i>	Maureen Freely		London		2005	2005: Faber and Faber, hardback 2006: Faber and Faber, paperback
Poetry	Berk, İlhan	<i>A Leaf About to Fall. Selected Poems</i>		George Messo		Cambridge		2006	Salt Publishing
Novel	Shafak, Elif	<i>The Gaze</i>	<i>Mahrem</i>	Brendan Freely		London	TEDA	2006	2006: Marion Boyars, paperback 2010: Viking, paperback

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Misc.	Collective	<i>The Warwick Review: New Writing from Turkey Vol. 1, March 2007</i>		Collective	Michael Hulse	Warwick		2007	
Short stories	Fergar, Feyyaz Kayacan	<i>Mrs. Valley's War - The Shelter Stories of Feyyaz Kayacan Fergar</i>	<i>Sığınak Hikâyeleri</i>	Ruth Christie and Selçuk Berilgen		Ware	TEDA	2007	Rockingham Press
Essays	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>Other Colours</i>	<i>Öteki Renkler</i>	Maureen Freely		London		2007	2007: Faber and Faber, hardback, 2008: Faber and Faber, paperback
Poetry	Oktay Rifat,	<i>Poems of Oktay Rifat</i>		Ruth Christie and Richard McKane		London		2007	Anvil Press Poetry
Novel	Tekin, Latife	<i>Swords of Ice</i>	<i>Buzdan Kılıçlar</i>	Saliha Paker and Mel Kenne		London	TEDA	2007	Marion Boyars

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Novel	Altun, Selçuk	<i>Songs My Mother Never Taught Me</i>	<i>Annemin Öğretmediği Şarkılar</i>	Ruth Christie and Selçuk Berilgen		London		2008	Telegram
Poetry	Berk, İlhan	<i>Madrigals</i>	<i>Kuşların Doğum Gününde Olacağım</i>	George Messo		Exeter		2008	Shearsmans Books
Memoir	Çetin, Fethiye	<i>My Grandmother</i>	<i>Anneanem</i>	Maureen Freely		London		2008	Verso
Novel	Orhan Kemal	<i>The Idle Years &amp; My Father's House</i>	<i>Avare Yıllar</i>	Collective		London	TEDA	2008	Peter Owen
Novel	Somer, Mehmet Murat	<i>The Prophet Murders</i>	<i>Peygamber Cinayetleri</i>	Kenneth Dakan		London		2008	Serpent's Tail
Misc.	Collective	<i>Edinburgh Review 125: Turkey</i>		Collective	Brian McCabe	Edinburgh		2009	
Novel	Altun, Selçuk	<i>Many and Many a Year Ago</i>	<i>Senelerce, Senelerce Evveldi</i>	Clifford and Selhan Endres		London		2009	Telegram

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Poetry	Ece Ayhan; Berk, İlhan; Cansever, Edip; Cemal Süreya, and Uyar, Turgut	<i>İkinci Yeni: The Turkish Avant-Garde</i>		George Messo		Exeter		2009	Shearsmans Books
Poetry	Berk, İlhan	<i>The Book of Things</i>	<i>Şeyler Kitabı</i>	George Messo		Cambridge	TEDA	2009	Salt Publishing
Novel	Pamuk, Orhan	<i>The Museum of Innocence</i>	<i>Masumiyet Müzesi</i>	Maureen Freely		London		2009	2009: Faber and Faber, hardback, 2010: Faber and Faber, paperback
Novel	Somer, Mehmet Murat	<i>The Gigolo Murder</i>	<i>Jigolo Cinayeti</i>	Kenneth Dakan		London		2009	Serpent's Tail & Penguin
Novel	Somer, Mehmet Murat	<i>The Kiss Murder</i>	<i>Buse Cinayeti</i>	Kenneth Dakan		London		2009	Serpent's Tail & Penguin
Poetry	Collective	<i>From This Bridge: Contemporar y Turkish Women Poets</i>		George Messo	George Messo			2010	The Conversation Paperpress
Memoir	Orhan Kemal	<i>In Jail with Nazım Hikmet</i>	<i>Nâzım Hikmet'le Üç Buçuk Yıl</i>	Bengisu Rona		London		2010	Saqi Books

Category	Author	Translation Title	Original Title	Translator	Editor	Location	Subsidy	Year	1st edition or re-edition
Short Stories	Gürsel, Nedim; Yula, Özen, Levi, Mario et al.	<i>The Book of Istanbul: A City in Short Fiction</i>		Aron Aji, Amy Spangler, Ruth Whitehouse	Jim Hinks and Gul Turner	Manchester	TEDA	2010	Comma Press

\* Table adapted from Paker and Yılmaz 2007

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