



BRILL

A Corpus, Not a Canon (Nor an Anthology) *Creating a “Library of Arabic Literature”**

Shawkat M. Toorawa

Yale University

shawkat.toorawa@yale.edu

Abstract

The Library of Arabic Literature was established through a grant from the New York University Abu Dhabi Institute, and, in collaboration with NYU Press, is publishing 75 significant works of Arabic literature, primarily from the 7th–19th centuries, from the widest possible range of genres. These appear on facing Arabic and English pages—the editions of the Arabic are authoritative, though not necessarily critical, relying in most cases on manuscript originals; the translations are into modern, lucid English, not “industry standard.” The article describes the Library’s conception, its methods, and how, in trying to achieve its ultimate goal of introducing the rich, largely untapped Arabic literary heritage to scholarly and general audiences, it rejects the notion of canon in favor of the notion of a corpus, not one it establishes, but one to which it contributes.

Keywords

anthology – Arabic literature – Arabic libraries – canon – corpus

* I am grateful to May Hawas for inviting me to contribute an essay about the Library of Arabic Literature (LAL) to this special issue. Although I am an executive editor of LAL, this essay is not intended as a way to tout the project (though admittedly I take pride in what it has accomplished). My intention has been to provide insight into the thought processes that have gone into the creation and establishing of LAL, and thereby contribute to the discussion about (what might constitute) world literature—of Arabic.

Creating a Corpus

Creating

Eight years ago, a group of scholars of Arabic literature, myself included, were given a rare opportunity—to build the Library of Arabic Literature, a collection of 35 volumes of editions-translations from the premodern Arabic literary tradition.¹ This opportunity was the result of a successful grant proposal by Philip Kennedy to the NYUAD Institute, the research arm of NYU Abu Dhabi. In his proposal, Kennedy wrote (emphases mine):

This proposal is for the establishment of a new “Library of Arabic Literature” (LAL). This will comprise the publication in book form with online support of translations into English in parallel-text format (i.e., with Arabic and English running texts on facing pages) of *the works of classical Arabic literature*. The phrase “Arabic literature” is *understood to include Islamic literature written in Arabic*. LAL will be *a standing project with the long-term goal of translating a substantial library in the coming years ... Biannual workshops will assemble the executive board and the current holders of translation fellowships to discuss, oversee and develop the aims of the project* in closed and public sessions.

1

Kennedy also placed as an epigraph to the proposal a statement by James Loeb (1867–1933) that appears in the preface of early volumes of the Loeb Classical Library, which Loeb founded and funded (emphases mine):²

In an age when the Humanities are being neglected more perhaps than at any time since the Middle Ages, and when men’s minds are turning more than ever before to the practical and the material, *it does not suffice to make pleas, however eloquent and convincing, for the safeguarding and further enjoyment of our greatest heritage from the past. Means must be found to place these treasures within the reach of all who care for the finer things of life.*

LOEB, n.p.

1 Upon renewal of the grant in 2015, 40 more volumes were funded, bringing the total number to 75. For an outside(r) overview of the first 14 titles in the project, see Zadeh.

2 In 2011, the Loeb Classical Library celebrated its 100th anniversary. At the time of writing, the Library has published 534 volumes.

In choosing to fund the project, the NYUAD Institute accepted Kennedy's sadly correct characterization of the situation, and agreed that "means must be found," means that were put at his disposal. With funds and patronage, Kennedy brought together sixteen colleagues (from Egypt, England, France, Lebanon, the United Arab Emirates and the United States) to brainstorm about what 35 volumes LAL might publish. He had in his proposal already identified "Some Candidate Texts for Early Selection (with initial, but not exclusive, concentration on literature/belles-lettres/poetry-poetics)." Below I reproduce that list—asterisks denote works then not yet translated into English; bold type works subsequently published by LAL, or that are currently under contract; and underlined titles those currently being considered by the editorial board (Kennedy 9–10):

Integral texts

**Dīwān* of Imru' al-Qays (preeminent pre-Islamic poet, 6th c.)³

**Dīwān* of Ḥassān ibn Thābit (poet of the prophet Muhammad, 7th c.)

Mu'allaqāt (Pendant Poems) (famous poems by major early poets, 6th c.)

**Kitāb al-Badī'* (Book of Novelty) of Ibn al-Mu'tazz (important book of modern rhetorical figures, 9th c.)

Maqāmāt (Assemblies) of al-Hamadhānī (famous collection of picaresque narratives, 10th c.)

Da'wat al-aṭibbā'* (Physician's Banquet**) of Ibn Buṭlān (semi-autobiographical tale, 11th c.)

Risālat al-Ghufrān* (Epistle of Forgiveness**) of al-Ma'arrī (satirical, philological, description of a visit to heaven and hell, 12th c.)

Ṭawq al-ḥamāmah (Neckring of the Dove) of Ibn Ḥazm (philosophical treatise on love, 12th c.)

Nisā' al-khulafā'* (Consorts of the Caliphs**) of Ibn al-Sā'ī (historian's biographies of the wives of caliphs and rulers, 13th c.)⁴

3 The word *dīwān* is used to describe the complete poems of a poet (or tribe), sometimes an anthology. The parenthetical characterizations of authors and works here are mine, not Kennedy's.

4 I confess responsibility for the inclusion of this work. When Kennedy was drafting the proposal and he asked me whether I had ideas for works he could include, I suggested *Nisā' al-khulafā'* because I thought attention should be directed to lesser known works too. "We shouldn't limit ourselves to the classics or the canon," I fatefully (?), brazenly (?), presciently (?), said.

***Kitāb* ([Log] Book) of Ibn Faḍlān** (description of a diplomatic mission up the Volga river, 9th c.)

***Risālah* (Epistle [on Legal Theory]) of al-Shafīʿī** (the earliest legal hermeneutical treatise, 9th c.)

Selections

A new anthology of adab (belles-lettres) and poetry

*A first volume of *Asrār al-Balāghah* (Secrets of Eloquence) by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (pioneering book of rhetoric, 11th c.)

*A first volume of *Dalāʾil al-iʿjāz* (Proofs of Inimitability) by ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Jurjānī (important study of Qur’anic tropes, 11th c.)

The first five *Maqāmāt* (Assemblies) of al-Ḥarīrī, with a view to produce all 50, with the commentary of al-Sharīsī (celebrated collection of picaresque narratives in ornate prose, 11th c.)

Epistles by al-Jāhīz (essayist, theologian and polymath, 9th c.)

Multi-volume works

al-ʿIqd al-farīd (The Unique necklace) of Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih (important anthology of poetry and prose from Andalusia, 10th c.)

**Kitāb al-Aghānī* of Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī (massive encyclopedic collection of poems, songs and biographies of singers, musicians and poets, 10th c.)

Kennedy’s wish list consists of works not yet translated into English, or ones he thought were in need of retranslation.⁵ All are “works of classical Arabic literature,” all are “Islamic literature written in Arabic” (by Islamic he meant emanating from Islamicate society, as the inclusion of a work by a Christian, *The Physician’s Banquet*, reveals). He concentrated on the 6th–13th centuries, and especially the 9th–11th; and he avoided philosophical texts (except for *The Neckring of the Dove*), Sufism, and Qur’an commentary, because they are already served by existing series.

Evidently, Kennedy had in mind a corpus (a “Library,” he would insist), and he made his modus known (Kennedy 4): “While multi-volume works of Arabic and Islamic literature will need in future to make up the library in its goal ultimately of being comprehensive, relatively short but significant works will

5 Or, as Joseph Lowry once put it, “translations that should never have been made”

be selected in the initial years to establish the methodologies and introduce the qualities and general aims of the project.” Of his inclusion of *Nisā’ al-khulafā’* (*Consorts of the Caliphs*), for example, Kennedy wrote, “This is a relatively little known and minor work, as some texts selected for translation should be. Ibn al-Sā’ī (d. 1276) was an Iraqi historian who held the post of Librarian at the Nizāmiyyah and the Mustanṣiriyyah Libraries in Baghdad. Little is known about his life and though he is credited with up to a hundred works—mostly in history, but also in *adab* [belles-lettres] and possibly Sufism—very little survives ...” (4).

Kennedy did not share his list with the scholars he assembled at the first meeting in March 2010. He simply went around the room and asked everyone to identify one or more works they imagined belong in a Library of Arabic Literature. The only criteria were that the work be in Arabic and be premodern; the modern, he averred, and we all agreed, was (finally) getting the attention it deserved.⁶ Once a work was suggested, at least one other person had to endorse it; if not, it got dropped off the list.

A Corpus

I reproduce that list below, in the sequence it was “generated.” I use asterisks again to indicate works not until then translated into English (and bracket these if they have since been translated); bold type to indicate works subsequently published, or forthcoming, by LAL—I also boldface the author’s name if a different work by that author has made it into the Library; and underlining for works under consideration now or in the past. Works that did not receive a second endorser are in angle brackets. I place a hash mark to signal works that also appeared in Kennedy’s original proposal. As will become clear from the temporal range, the group did not pay too much attention to period (or century), though we did identify in what generic/thematic cluster we felt a given work belonged, which I indicate in the right-hand column:⁷

6 For a criticism of this, see further below.

7 LAL soon thereafter abandoned the idea of cluster, that is, abandoned the idea that specific fields or themes ought to be represented, and began to pay more attention to century. The editorial board decided early on that it was more important—at least initially—for the Library to comprise texts from the whole span of premodern Arabic literary output (6th–19th centuries), than for it to “represent” specific fields in, or genres of, Arabic literature.

* <i>‘Ajā’ib al-makhlūqāt</i> (The wonders of creation) of al-Qazwīnī [13th c.]	Marvels/Geography
* <i>Manāqib Baghdād</i> (The virtues of Baghdad) of Ibn al-Jawzī [12th c.]	Biography/Piety
* <i>Kitāb al-Muwashshā</i> (The brocade) of al-Washshā [9th–10th c.]	Mores/Court culture
* <i>Kitāb al-Aghāni</i> , (The Book of songs), vol. 1, of Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī [10th c.]	Literature/Biography
< * <i>Ṭabaqāt al-Mu‘tazilah</i> (Classes of Mu‘tazilites) of al-Jushamī [11th c.]	Religion/Biography
(*) <i>Kitāb al-Taṭfil</i> (Book of Party-Crashers) of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī (11th c.) ⁸	Anecdotes/Humor
* <i>Al-A‘lāq al-naḥṣah</i> (Valuable assets) of Ibn Rustah [9th–10th c.]	Geography
#/ * <i>Da‘wat al-aṭibbā’</i> (The Physicians’ Banquet) Ibn Buṭlān [11th]	Fiction/Satire
* <i>Kitāb al-Wuzarā’ wa-l-kuttāb</i> (Ministers and secretaries) al-Jahshiyārī [10th c.]	History/Administration
#/ * <i>Al-Faraj ba’d al-shiddah</i> (Deliverance from Evil) of al-Tanūkhī [10th c.]	Narratives/Stories
* <i>Maṣārī‘ al-‘ushshāq</i> (Lovers’ battlegrounds) of al-Sarrāj [11th c.]	Literature/Love
<i>Al-Sīrah al-nabawīyyah</i> ([The Prophet’s] biography) of Ibn Hishām [8th–9th c.]	Biography/Religion
< * <i>Sīyar al-thughūr</i> (Accounts of the marches) of al-Ṭarsūsī [10th c.]	Biography/Warfare
* <i>Al-Akhhār al-tiwāl</i> (Extended accounts) of al-Dīnawarī [9th c.]	History
(*) <i>Al-Ḥikāyāt al-‘ajibah</i> (Wondrous tales) anonymous [10th–14th c.] ⁹	Tales
* <i>Kitāb Baghdād</i> ([History of] Baghdad) of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir [9th c.]	Chronicle/History
< * <i>Tārīkh</i> (Chronicle) of Ḥamzah al-Iṣfahānī [10th c.]	Chronicle/History
* <i>Mū‘at laylah</i> (Hundred and One Nights), anonymous [10th–15th c.]	Tales
< * <i>Kitāb al-Warā</i> (The book of scrupulosity) of Abi al-Dunyā [9th c.]	Piety
* <i>Kitāb al-Tanbih wal-ishraf</i> (Notification and verification) of al-Mas‘ūdī [10th c.]	Encyclopedic history/Geography
(*) <i>Hikāyat Abī l-Qāsim</i> (The imitation of Abū l-Qāsim) of al-Azdī [11th c.]	Banquet text/Satire
* <i>Manāqib Aḥmad</i> (Virtues of Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal) of Ibn al-Jawzī [12th c.]	Biography/Piety
< * <i>Ṣilat Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī</i> , (‘Arīb’s Continuation of al-Ṭabarī’s History) [10th c.]	Chronicle/History
* <i>Maqāmāt</i> (Assemblies) of Ibn Nāqiyah [11th c.]	Assemblies/Satire
* <i>Dhamm al-hawā</i> (The censure of passion) of Ibn al-Jawzī [11th c.]	Mores/Piety

8 A translation has since appeared: al-Khaṭīb 2012.

9 A translation has since appeared: Anonymous, *Tales of the Marvelous*. Another important recent Penguin publication is: al-Nuwayrī, *Ultimate Ambition*.

⟨ <i>*Akhbār al-ḥamqā</i> (Accounts about dolts) of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī [12th c.]⟩	Narratives/Humor
⟨ <i>*Akhḷāq al-wazīrayn</i> (The faults of the two viziers) al-Tawḥīdī [10th–11th c.]⟩	Narrative/Satire
<i>*Kitāb al-Ḥawāmīl wa-l-shawāmīl</i> (Questions and answers) of al-Tawḥīdī ¹⁰ [10th c.]	Philosophy/Theology
<i>*Kitāb al-Imtāʿ wa-l-muʿānasah</i> (Delight and Bonhomie) of al-Tawḥīdī [10th c.]	Anecdotes/Mores/ Philosophy
⟨ <i>*Dīwān</i> of Jamīl [7th c.]⟩	Poetry
<i>*Dīwān</i> of al-Mutanabbī [10th c.]	Poetry
⟨ <i>*Kitāb al-Awāʾil</i> (The book of firsts) of al-ʿAskarī [10th c.]⟩	Literary history
<i>*Al-Muḥāḍarāt</i> (Discourses) of al-Yūsī [16th c.]	Encyclopedic work
<i>*Akhbār Abī Tammām</i> (The Life and Times of Abū Tammām) of al-Ṣūlī [10th c.]	Biography/Literary criticism
⟨ <i>*Al-Ṣāḥibī fī al-luḡḥah</i> ([Treatise] on Language [for al-Ṣāḥīb]) of Ibn Fāris [10th c.]⟩	Philosophy of language
# <i>Muʿallaqāt</i> (Pendant poems) [6th–7th c.]	Poetry
#/ <i>*Kitāb al-Badīʿ</i> (The book of novel rhetorical devices) of Ibn al-Muʿtazz [9th c.]	Poetry criticism
⟨ <i>*Kitāb al-Shiʿr wa-l-shuʿarāʾ</i> (Book of poetry and poets) of Ibn Qutaybah [9th c.]⟩	Biography/Poetry criticism
<i>*Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl</i> (Snippets of examples) of Ibn al-Muʿtazz [9th c.]	Poetry about wine
⟨ <i>*Adab al-nadīm</i> (Etiquette of the boon-companion) of Kushājīm [10th c.]⟩	Court culture
<i>*Risālat al-Muḍīḥah</i> (The disclosing epistle) of al-Ḥātimī [10th c.]	Poetry criticism
<i>*Uyūn al-akhbār</i> (Choice narratives) of Ibn Qutaybah [9th c.]	Mores/Cultural history
<i>*Yatīmat al-dahr</i> (The unique pearl of the age) al-Thaʿālibī [10th–11th c.]	Anthology of poetry and prose
<i>*Kitāb Hujaj al-nubuwwah</i> [sic] (Proof of [Muḥammad’s] prophecy) of al-Jāḥiẓ [9th c.]	Theology
<i>*Al-Sāq alā l-Sāq</i> (Leg over Leg) of al-Shidyāq [19th c.]	Novel/Travel account
⟨ <i>Al-Muwaṭṭaʾa</i> (The well-trodden path) of Mālik (al-Shaybānī’s rescension) [8th c.]⟩	Law
<i>*Sīrah</i> (Autobiography) of al-Muʿayyad [11th c.]	Autobiography/History
⟨ <i>Sīr al-asrār</i> (Secret of secrets) of Pseudo-Aristotle, anonymous [10th c.]⟩	Encyclopedic treatise/Ethics

10 Properly, a correspondence with Miskawayh.

⟨ <i>Sīrat Banī Hilāl</i> (Epic of the Banī Hilāl), oral epic, anonymous [12th–20th c.]⟩	Oral epic
⟨#/ <i>*Dīwān</i> of Imru' al-Qays [6th c.]⟩	Poetry
⟨ <i>*Dīwān</i> of Abu al-'Atāhiyah [8th–9th c.]⟩	Poetry
⟨ <i>*Kitāb al-Maysir</i> (Book of gambling) of Ibn Qutaybah [9th c.]⟩	Theology
<i>*Faḍl al-'Arab</i> (Book of the Superiority of the Arabs) of Ibn Qutaybah [9th c.]	History/Mores/Polemic
# <i>Risālah</i> (The Epistle on Legal Theory) of al-Shāfi'ī [9th c.]	Law
⟨ <i>*Al-Risālah fi al-mantiq</i> (On Logic) of Ibn al-Muqaffa' [8th c.]⟩	Logic
<i>*Kitāb al-Luma'</i> (Gleams) of al-Fīrūzābādī	Law
<i>*Dīwān</i> of 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah [7th–8th c.]	Poetry
⟨ <i>*Kitāb al-Buldān</i> (Book of Regions) of Ibn al-Faqīh [10th c.]⟩	Geography
⟨ <i>Kitāb al-Masālik wal-mamālik</i> of Ibn Khurrahādhibih [9th–10th c.]⟩	Geography
# <i>Kitāb</i> [sic] (lit. Book of Ibn Faḍlān) [10th c.]	Travel account
<i>*Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn</i> (Exposition of Muslim beliefs) of al-Ash'arī [9th–10th c.]	Theology/ Heresiology
(*) <i>Nahj al-balāghah</i> (Peak of eloquence) compiled by al-Sharīf al-Raḍī [7th–10th c.]	Anthology/ Oratory/Piety
<i>*Ta'rif</i> (Autobiography) of Ibn Khaldūn [14th c.]	Autobiography/Memoir
⟨ <i>*Majālis</i> ([Teaching] Sessions) of al-Mu'ayyad [11th c.]⟩	Theology
<i>*Dīwān</i> of al-Mu'ayyad [11th c.]	Poetry
⟨ <i>*Dīwān al-Hamāsah</i> of Abū Tammām [6th–9th c.]⟩	Anthology of poetry
<i>*Rasā'il</i> (Epistles) of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (8th c.)	Epistolary prose
<i>*Al-Bayān wal-tabyīn</i> (Clarity and clarification) of al-Jāhiz [9th c.]	Language/Rhetoric/ Theology
<i>*Mu'jam al-udabā'</i> (Guide for the learned), vol. 1, of Yāqūt [13th c.]	Biography/Literary history
<i>*Risālat al-ghufrān</i> (Epistle of Forgiveness) of al-Ma'arrī [11th c.]	Prose/Satire/Philology
#/ <i>*Asrār al-balāghah</i> (Secrets of eloquence) of al-Jurjānī [11th c.]	Rhetoric/Literary criticism
<i>*Dīwān</i> of Abū Nuwās [8th–9th c.]	Poetry
<i>*Kashf al-asrār</i> (Exposing secrets) of al-Jawbarī [13th c.]	Compendium of Trickery
<i>*Al-Diyārāt</i> (Monasteries) of al-Shābushtī [10th c.]	History/Geography/ Anecdotes
<i>*Uqalā' al-majānīn</i> (Intelligent madmen) of al-Nisābūrī [10th–11th c.]	Anecdotes/Mores
⟨ <i>*Kitāb al-adhkiyā'</i> (Book of wits) of Ibn al-Jawzī [12th c.]⟩	Anecdotes/Wit
⟨Anthology of al-Ṣāhib ibn 'Abbād's letters [10th c.]⟩	Epistolary prose
⟨*Apologia of al-'Aṭṭār [18th c.]⟩	Religion
⟨One or more religious works by al-Suyūṭī (15th c.)⟩	Religion

The overlap, as well as the absence of overlap, with Kennedy's list is of considerable interest, not only inasmuch as they relate to the Library of Arabic Literature's eventual choices, but to the extent that they reflect what the group believed needed to be translated and made available in English.¹¹ Although we were not yet describing our modus as "a corpus not a canon"—in fact, there was not really even a "we" quite yet—the idea that we were not establishing a canon, but, rather, identifying desiderata works, emerged as an important principle and modus. Thus, some very important, and canonical, works fell away, such as al-Tawḥīdī's *Akhlāq al-wazīrayn*, the *Dīwān* of Jamīl, the *Dīwān* of al-Mutanabbī, Mālik's *Muwatta'*, and Abū Tammām's *Ḥamāsah*. And we were acutely aware of the fact that there was very little from the 15th through 18th centuries, a neglect several of us had been working for years to remedy. But if we remove titles that did not receive a second endorsement, a strong case could be made for having at our disposal (the makings of) a "canon" (of some kind). Here are those titles, 51 of them (listed now in chronological order):

# <i>Mu'allaqāt</i> (Pendant poems) [6th–7th c.]	Poetry
* <i>Dīwān</i> of 'Umar ibn Abī Rabī'ah [7th–8th c.]	Poetry
* <i>Rasā'il</i> (Epistles) of 'Abd al-Ḥamīd (8th c.)	Epistolary prose
* <i>Dīwān</i> of Abū Nuwās [8th–9th c.]	Poetry
* <i>Fuṣūl al-tamāthīl</i> (Snippets of examples) of Ibn al-Mu'tazz [9th c.]	Poetry about wine
<i>Al-Sīrah al-nabawīyyah</i> ([The Prophet's] biography) by Ibn Hishām [8th–9th c.]	Biography/Religion
* <i>Al-Bayān wal-tabayīn</i> (Clarity and clarification) of al-Jāḥiẓ [9th c.]	Language/ Rhetoric/Theology
#/* <i>Kitāb al-Badī'</i> (The book of novel rhetorical devices) of Ibn al-Mu'tazz [9th c.]	Poetry criticism
* <i>Kitāb Baghdād</i> ([History of] Baghdad) of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir [9th c.]	Chronicle/History
* <i>Al-Akhbār al-tiwāl</i> (Extended accounts) of al-Dīnawarī [9th c.]	History
* <i>Uyūn al-akhbār</i> (Choice narratives) of Ibn Qutaybah [9th c.]	Mores/Cultural history
* <i>Kitāb al-Ḥujjah</i> (The Book of proof) of al-Jāḥiẓ [9th c.]	Theology
* <i>Faql al-'Arab</i> (The Book of the Superiority of the Arabs) of Ibn Qutaybah [9th c.]	History/Mores/Polemic

11 The absence of multi-volume works is a result of Kennedy's suggestion that, initially at least, we should not think too big. That would change, as I describe below.

- # *Risālah* (The Epistle on Legal Theory) of al-Shāfiʿī [9th c.] Jurisprudence
- **Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* (Exposition of Muslim beliefs) of al-Ashʿarī Theology/
[9th–10th c.] Heresiography
- **Kitāb al-Muwashshā* (The brocade) of al-Washshāʿ [9th–10th c.] Mores/Court culture
- (**Nahj al-balāghah*) (Peak of eloquence) comp. al-Sharīf al-Raḍī Anthology/Ora-
[7th–10th c.] tory/Piety
- **Al-Aʿlāq al-naḥḥīyah* (Valuable assets) of Ibn Rustah [9th–10th c.] Geography
- # *Kitāb* [sic] (lit. The Book of Ibn Faḍlān) [10th c.] Travel account
- **Kitāb al-Aghāni*, (The Book of songs), vol. 1, of Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī Literature/Song/
[10th c.] Biography
- **Al-Wuzarāʾ wa-l-kuttāb* (Ministers and secretaries) al-Jahshiyārī History/Administration
[10th c.]
- #/**Al-Faraj baʿd al-shiddah* (Deliverance from Evil) of al-Tanūkhī Narratives/Stories
[10th c.]
- Al-Tanbīh wal-ishrāf* (Notification and verification) of al-Masʿūdī Encyclopedic work/
[10th c.] History/Geography
- **Al-Ḥawāmil wal-shawāmil* (Questions and answers) of Philosophy/Theology
Miskawayh/Tawḥīdī [10th c.]
- **Al-Imtāʿ wal-muʿānasah* (Delight and Bonhomie) of al-Tawḥīdī Anecdotes/Mores/
[10th c.] Philosophy
- **Dīwān al-Mutanabbī* [10th c.] Poetry
- **Akhbār Abī Tammām* (The Life and Times of Abū Tammām) of Biography/Literary
al-Ṣūlī [10th c.] criticism/Poetry
- **Risālat al-Mūḍīḥah* (The disclosing epistle) of al-Ḥatīmī [10th c.] Poetry criticism
- **Al-Diyārāt* (Monasteries) of al-Shābushtī [10th c.] History/Geogra-
phy/Anecdotes
- **Uqalāʾ al-majānīn* (Intelligent madmen) of al-Nisābūrī [10th–11th c.] Anecdotes/Mores
- **Yatīmat al-dahr* (The unique pearl of the age) of al-Thaʿālibī Anthology of poetry
[10th–11th c.] and prose
- (**Kitāb al-Taṭfil*) (Book of Party-Crashers) of al-Khaṭīb al-Baghḍādī Anecdotes/Humor
(11th c.)
- **Dīwān* of al-Muʿayyad (11th c.) Poetry
- **Sīrah* (Autobiography) of al-Muʿayyad [11th c.] Autobiography/History
- #/**Daʿwat al-aṭibbāʾ* (The Physicians' Banquet) of Ibn Buṭlān [11th] Fiction/Satire
- (**Hikāyat Abī l-Qāsim*) (The imitation of Abū l-Qāsim)—of al-Azdī Banquet text/Satire
[11th c.]
- **Maṣāriʿ al-ʿushshāq* (Lovers' battlegrounds) of Sarrāj [11th c.] Literature/Love
- **Maqāmāt* (Assemblies) of Ibn Nāqiyah [11th c.] Assemblies/Satire
- **Dhamm al-hawā* (The censure of passion) of Ibn al-Jawzī [11th c.] Mores/Piety
- **Risālat al-ghufrān* (Epistle of Forgiveness) of al-Maʿarrī [11th c.] Prose/Satire/Philology

#/* <i>Asrār al-balāghah</i> (Secrets of eloquence) of al-Jurjānī [11th c.]	Rhetoric/Literary criticism
* <i>Manāqib Baghdād</i> (The virtues of Baghdad) of Ibn al-Jawzī [12th c.]	Biography/Piety
* <i>Manāqib Aḥmad</i> (<i>Virtues of the Imam Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal</i>) of Ibn al-Jawzī [12th c.]	Biography/Piety
* <i>ʿAjāʾib al-makhlūqāt</i> (The wonders of creation) of al-Qazwīnī [13th c.]	Marvels/Geography
* <i>Muʿjam al-udabāʾ</i> (Guide for the learned), vol. 1, of Yāqūt [13th c.]	Biography/Literary history
* <i>Kashf al-asrār</i> (Unveiling of secrets) of al-Jawbarī [13th c.]	Compendium of Trickery
* <i>Tārīf</i> (Autobiography) of Ibn Khaldūn [14th c.]	Autobiography/Memoir
(* <i>Al-Hikāyāt al-ʿajbah</i> (Wondrous tales), anonymous [10th–14th c.]	Tales
* <i>Mīʾat laylah</i> (Hundred and One Nights), anonymous [10th–15th c.]	Tales
* <i>Al-Muḥāḍarāt</i> (Discourses) of al-Yūsī [16th c.]	Encyclopedic work
* <i>al-Sāq ʿalā l-Sāq</i> (Leg over Leg) of al-Shidyāq [19th c.]	Novel/Travel account

Kennedy's next step was to appoint executive editors and an editorial board. This board was tasked with the selection of works to be put under contract. The first "tranche" (a term we abandoned the year following) consisted of the following works and editor-translators (*LAL Notes* 3):

- Anthology* [English-only] (van Gelder)
- The Epistle on Legal Theory of al-Shafīʿī* (Lowry)
- Leg Over Leg, vols. 1 and 2* (Humphrey Davies)
- Virtues of the Imam Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, vol. 1* (Cooperson)
- The Epistle of Forgiveness of al-Maʿarrī, vols. 1* (van Gelder/Schoeler)

These first fruits of the harvest were in large measure the result of several overlapping considerations: our desire to have books appear regularly starting 2012; the existence of draft translations (*Anthology, Epistle on Legal Theory*); authoritative existing editions of the Arabic, so that the search and editing processes would not delay publication (all the titles); and our ability to pester the scholars involved, because they were on the editorial board (Lowry, Cooperson), retired (van Gelder and Schoeler), or a professional translator (Davies). This is not to suggest that the work was easy. If anything, it was quite the opposite. Lowry was taking on the foundational document of Islamic jurisprudence, and producing the first new (and corrective) translation in fifty years. Davies, and van Gelder & Schoeler and Davies took on works emblematically and iconically regarded as untranslatable; indeed, neither had been translated in their entirety into any language.

On the question of untranslatability, the Library takes the position that translation is possible, and necessary.¹² When Humphrey Davies, without any doubt the preeminent translator of Arabic into English—and the translator of al-Shidyāq's *Leg Over Leg* for the Library—once was asked whether it was true that there were authors and works who were untranslatable, he replied:

I think everything can be translated or nothing can be translated. Either of those two positions is logical, anything in between illogical. If you ask 'Can Mutanabbi be translated?' you have to be prepared to ask, 'Can Bashshar ibn Burd be translated, can Adonis, can Naguib Mahfouz, can the newspaper, can can can ...?' since Mutanabbi is not different in essence from any other writer.¹³

LYNX-QUALEY, n.p.

Peter Cole, a cherished Library of Arabic Literature advisor—and LAL teacher, in master-classes on how to translate poetry—recently echoed this in his answer to a similar question:

I find the whole business of untranslatables fetishitic and largely fruitless. All experience is at some level untranslatable, including experience of another language or work of art or human interaction, and all of us do what we can to bring something of it into our language, including the fact that it seems like that can't be done. Wonder of wonders, the results are often amazing—and, on occasion, life-changing.

CHAFFEE, n.p. (see also CRESWELL)

There is no doubt that Arabic poses special challenges, the Qur'an for example (although that has not stopped some 75 translators into English from trying), or early Arabic poetry (especially by virtue of the fact that it is metered and features monorhyme, something it exhibited until the mid-1950s), and the fact

12 On this question, see Apter. See also Rogers' perceptive essay on how to see Euro-American languages and literary institutions simultaneously as enabling and disabling.

13 Al-Mutanabbī (10th c.), Bashshār (8th c.) and Adonis (20th–21st c.) are widely regarded as among the greatest Arabic poets, and the most difficult to translate. LAL has now cautiously embarked on a collaborative al-Mutanabbī translation project. For some preliminary remarks on this, see (Lynx-Qualey "His Voice").

that it is a root cluster-based language. The idea that it is untranslatable, however, is, well, *kalām fāḍī* [poppycock, lit. “empty talk”].¹⁴

The experience of bringing out the first three books helped us to fine-tune. We began to call the titles we selected “significant works”; we resolved only to publish “modern, lucid English translations”; we decided we would forge ahead with “authoritative, though not necessarily critical, Arabic editions”; and we articulated our mandate: “to introduce the rich, largely untapped Arabic literary heritage to both a general audience of readers as well as to scholars and students.” The Library’s website, printed materials, and books accordingly all feature the following statement (emphases mine):

The Library of Arabic Literature series offers Arabic editions and English translations of *significant works* of Arabic literature, with an *emphasis on the seventh to nineteenth centuries*. The Library of Arabic Literature thus includes texts from the pre-Islamic era to the cusp of the modern period, and *encompasses a wide range of genres*, including poetry, poetics, fiction, religion, philosophy, law, science, history, and historiography.

Books in the series are edited and translated by internationally recognized scholars and are published in parallel-text format with Arabic and English on facing pages, and are also made available as English-only paperbacks.

The Library encourages scholars to produce *authoritative, though not necessarily critical, Arabic editions*, accompanied by *modern, lucid English translations*. Its ultimate goal is *to introduce the rich, largely untapped Arabic literary heritage* to both a general audience of readers as well as to scholars and students.

n.p.

The Library has published 21 titles in 27 volumes, 2 reissued in paperback, 8 issued as part of an English-only paperback sub-series. In all cases, we abided by the above principles.¹⁵ We also developed an editorial modus, demanding for both the Library’s editors and our editor-translators, but one that we believe yields a superior outcome. The four most important aspects of this modus are:

1. Every editor-translator is assigned a project editor (a.k.a. volume editor), namely someone from the Library’s editorial board to assist her as she edits and translates. This is not simply someone who reminds her about LAL norms, but someone who is for all practical purposes a collaborator.

14 For the views of the editors on this question, see (Lynx-Qualey “Library”).

15 On what James Montgomery has called the “unintended consequences” see (Live).

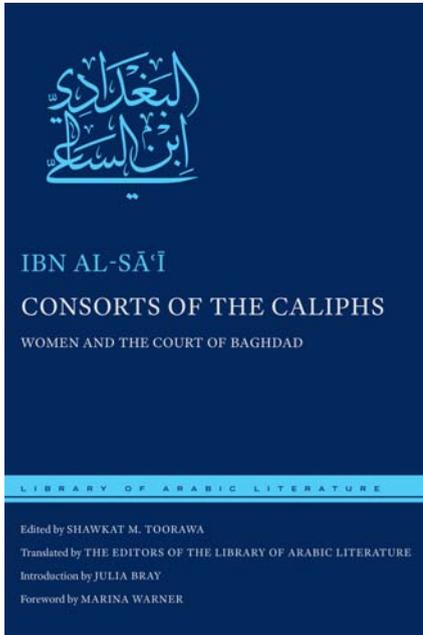


FIGURE 1 LAL's 12th title, showcasing the collaborative nature of the venture

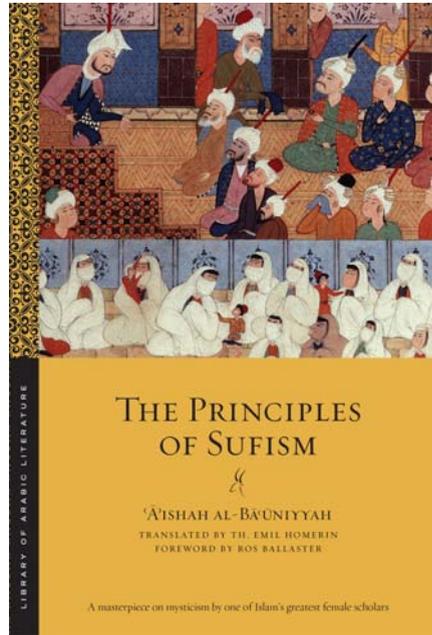


FIGURE 2 LAL's 7th title, issued as the 5th volume in LAL's subsidiary English-only paperback series

2. The Library does not want critical editions, but we do insist on authoritative editions. The former discourages specialists who want to do the philology (though we will happily put a work's critical edition incarnation online). The latter discourages translators who do not wish to edit, which for the Library means, minimally, comparing existing editions and consulting manuscripts (which the Library will assist in obtaining). This expectation has brought challenges with it, and directly impacts what works the Library has been able to publish. Simply being a good translator is not sufficient. Works have to be edited, and have to be integral.

3. The Library encourages collaboration at *all* levels. We have, for example, works featuring two co-editor-translators, one editor and one translator, co-editors and one translator, reviewers, and even collective translations. The first collaborative board translation was Ibn al-Sā'ī's *Consorts of the Caliphs*; the second is the forthcoming collaborative translation of 'Antarah's *Dīwān*.¹⁶

16 For statements about the importance to the Library of collaboration, see Toorawa "Note on the Translation." See also (Lynx-Qualey "On Collaboratively"; "Consorts").

4. Modern, lucid English has not been the norm in the translation of premodern Arabic. Even the Library's editorial board members have been guilty of producing the kind of English the Library rejects, what we call "industry standard" (see LAL Handbook). That so much of premodern Arabic literature has entered world literature in poor, inelegant, even wrong, translations, and frequently based on a text that has not been established according to articulated editorial principles, only begins to describe the dire situation in which that literary heritage in translation finds itself.¹⁷ As Kennedy has observed (emphases mine):

The parlous situation of what is available in English from medieval Arabic literature, one relevant sub-field within the larger project, is well illustrated by Robert Irwin's acclaimed anthology, *Night and Horses and the Desert* (Anchor Books, 2002): this is the best anthology of translations in the field, yet it is culled from the works of diverse translators across 150 years of "orientalism"; *the stylistic disparity* of what we have in English from medieval Arabic is remarkable and, further, it has *scant regard for full and integral textual ontology*. Given the extent of the canon being represented, *the paucity of what actually exists in translation is quite astounding*.¹⁸

17 This is, alas, not unique to premodern Arabic literature.

18 Kennedy (2–4) acknowledged existing "exceptional special series" not in competition with the project, "rather, given the huge scope of the field in broadest terms, they are complementary and concentrate discretely on circumscribed aspects of the Islamic religious or philosophical heritage." He mentions: Brigham Young University's *Islamic Translation Series*, published by the University of Chicago Press (13 titles, 1997–2014); Bibliotheca Persica's *History of al-Ṭabarī*, published by SUNY Press (39 volumes, 1985–99); *Ismaili Texts and Translations Series*, published in association with Oxford University Press (15 titles, 2000–16); the Islamic Texts Society (13 titles in *The Ghazali Series*, 14 in the *Translations from the Islamic Heritage Series*); Fons Vitae's Sufism series (30 titles); and The Royal Aal al-Bayt Foundation *Great Qur'an Commentaries* series, published by Fons Vitae (5 titles). As is clear from this list, with the exception of the *History of al-Ṭabarī* (partially NEH-funded), the remit of all these series is religious texts, with a focus on Qur'an, Sufism and esoterica, and Islamic philosophy.

Not a Canon (Nor an Anthology)

Not a Canon

As works began to appear, supporters and doubters, from the academic community and outside it, began to wonder how we chose our books, why we chose some and not others, why we were “ignoring” classics and canonical texts, why we were publishing little-known ones. Some insisted we were willy-nilly engaged in the creation of a canon, however much we protested. And we did protest.

We realized that we needed to explain that we were building a Library—by definition a concept that welcomes any book—not a canon. In November 2014, several editors participated in a panel titled “A Corpus, Not a Canon: Translating Classical Arabic for the Modern Reader” at Penn’s Philadelphia bookstore. In April 2015, Marina Warner welcomed the entire editorial team and a significant number of editor-translators and international advisory board members to All Souls College, Oxford, for “A Corpus Not a Canon: A Workshop on the Library of Arabic Literature,” consisting of a series of 6 panels. In March 2016, the editorial board presented “A Corpus or a Canon? The Priorities and Principles of the Library of Arabic Literature,” at the annual gathering of scholars engaged in the study of premodern Arabic texts.¹⁹ We maintain that, “It is not a small group of people who’ve decided what the corpus is, or what the canon is. It really is about trying to embrace as large a group of people who are enamored of the tradition as possible.” (see Live).

Ferial Ghazoul may be right in pointing out that there is no getting away from canon-creation, “whether you call these texts a corpus or a canon or key texts or foundational texts,” and as Joseph Lowry has said, the project does consist in “self-conscious acts of system-building and theory construction,” affecting what we see in the past, and how.²⁰ But Kennedy is clear on this point, “This is not a canon, it’s a corpus. We’re getting away from the idea of canon. People will say, “Are you creating a canon?” And the answer is, “No.” There’s no question. The idea of a canon is just old-fashioned. It’s a form of intellectual imperialism” (Lynx-Qualey “Philip”).

Another reason we can insist we are not creating a canon is the sheer volume of what we do not have. A canon emerges from conversations, debates,

19 The 226th Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society, the oldest learned society in the United States devoted to a specific discipline.

20 See Live. Ghazoul’s characterization of the project as Orientalist is only true in the pejorative sense of that term, not in its guise as a venerable tradition of scholarship. See Kennedy’s remarks about “orientalism” above.

valuations—and is shaped by anthologies from within the literary tradition—but so little survives. The texts the Library of Arabic Literature can realistically produce—as opposed to those that are available, interesting, and extant, and because of capacity—is an infinitesimally small number. Even if the Library publishes 75 books (the aspirational, funded number), in the space of about fifteen years, we will have published .01 percent of the things which we would like to have appear.²¹ There is no reliable figure, but it seems likely that only about 5% of what was ever composed in Arabic survives, and only about 5% of that has been edited from manuscripts. Even if those figures are low, and we inflate both to 10%, we are still looking at only 1% of total output, though I suspect that even if we published all the works of just one writer (not that all are extant), such as Ibn al-Jawzī, that would involve publishing some 200 titles;²² the superb biographical and cultural history of poetry, song and music, Abū al-Faraj al-Iṣfahānī's *Book of Songs* alone is in 30 large published volumes. The situation is simply not what it is for Ancient Greek and Latin, described as follows by Adam Kirsch, and quoted on the Loeb Classical Library website:

Here is 1,400 years of human culture, all the texts that survive from one of the greatest civilizations human beings have ever built—and it can all fit in a bookcase or two. To capture all the fugitive texts of the ancient world, some of which survived the Dark Ages in just a single moldering copy in some monastic library, and turn them into affordable, clear, sturdy accurate books, is one of the greatest accomplishments of modern scholarship—and one of the most democratic.

LOEB, n.p.

Nor an Anthology

The enormously important anthology, *Kitāb al-Manthūr wal-manzūm* (Book of Prose and Poetry), of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir (d. 893) was a 14-volume work probably compiled in the 870s; a century later, only 13 of its volumes were extant. Of those 13, 3 are extant today, in 3 manuscripts: one in London, one in Cairo, one possibly in Baghdad (it was moved shortly before the US invasion of Iraq). Thus, 2 manuscripts of 3 volumes of a 14-volume anthology that would have almost certainly illuminated what was considered canonical in the late 9th century. This same author wrote 50–60 other works: only one volume of one

21 When the Library's grant was up for renewal, the external reviewers asked the executive editors how many books we would publish if money were no object, that is, if we hadn't budgeted for (just) 40; they replied 1000.

22 For all the six sessions of the All Souls College workshop, see (Live).

other multi-volume work, a cultural and political history of Baghdad, survives, and in only one manuscript. This same author is mentioned in one version of a famous anecdote, as follows:

We were one day talking about pleasing places, and Ibn Durayd was present.

Someone said, "The most pleasing of all places is the Damascus Oasis."

—"No," another said, "surely it's the Ubullah Canal."

—"Samarqand, rather," said another.

—Yet another said, "No, Nahrawān."

—"Bawwān Gorge, in Fārs," said another.

—While yet another said, "The Barmakid Fire-Temple of Balkh."

—"These are pleasure-grounds for the eyes," responded Ibn Durayd. "What are your views on the pleasure-grounds of the heart?"

—"What are they?" we asked.

—"The Quintessential accounts (*ʿUyūn al-akhbār*) of al-Qutaybī," he replied, "The Flower (*al-Zahrah*) of Ibn Dāwūd, and *The Disquiet of the Yearningful* (*Qalaq al-mushtāq*) of Ibn Abī Ṭāhir." And then he recited the following:

*Let others see their recreation
in beautiful songstresses and wine.
What we offer are literary gatherings and books
as recreations of the mind.*

YĀQŪT 18:142–3

Of these three books, the first two survive, but have never been translated in their entirety into English (or, as far as I know, into any other language), and the third does not survive. If we accept Ibn Durayd's characterization—and we can take him at his word, as the (surviving) books he identifies are acknowledged classics—world literature is missing great pieces of Arabic literature.

When it comes to Arabic literature—effectively 1,500 years of literary output from the Atlantic shore to Central and Southeast Asia—the disproportionate focus in "world literature" has been on the Qur'an, on the Arabian Nights, and of course (no quarrel here) on the modern. But, as Geert Jan van Gelder writes in the introduction to his anthology for the Library of Arabic Literature:

In the Western world the two Arabic books that are best known are, inevitably, the *Thousand and One Nights* and the Qur'an; but neither

is typical or representative of Arabic literature, the one being partly a product of European literature, at least in the form that has become world literature, and the other a unique text in more ways than one.

13

He proceeds to include excerpts from neither in his collection.²³ Neither does the Library of Arabic Literature. In May of 2015, the executive editors participated on a panel titled, “Should the Library of Arabic Literature Translate the Qur’an?” at the University of Cambridge Qur’an Seminar. The answer to the question was No. Translations of the Qur’an come out almost every year. And the Arabian Nights has virtually become an industry unto itself. It is true that the Library has published *The Hundred and One Nights*, but this is the very first translation into English of the work. And future anthologies being planned by the editorial board are organized around genre, e.g. a collection of Andalusian poetry; and around theme, notably an anthology of texts on “emotions” drawing from the entire 1,400 years of output.

A Conversation

The prospects for premodern Arabic literature are not rosy. Without the seductions of modernity’s trappings, without the inevitable imbrication of the West (the modern novel, the modern play, the modernist poem, are all Western forms that have become successful as Arabic genres), without the East-West encounter, whether in content or plot, publishers express little interest. It is only thanks to a handful of European presses committed to the region’s premodern histories and cultures—notably Brill in Leiden, The Netherlands, Peeters in Leuven, Belgium, and Harrassowitz in Wiesbaden, Germany—and an equally small number of university presses, that material in Arabic is translated and disseminated. Even then—inevitably, given the anticipated sales—the price point is prohibitive. The recent creation in Qatar and the UAE of generous prizes that also consider and value premodern Arabic literature may entice translators and publishers, but the fact remains that the modern and the Western or Western-looking or Western-palatable remain the main attraction for many proponents of world literature. Even forward-thinking W.W. Norton

23 Kennedy has called van Gelder’s Anthology “less canonical than a traditional anthology would be,” “by its very nature eclectic,” signaling LAL’s attempts to sidestep canon-creation, see (Lynx-Qualey “Re-membering”).

has so far only included the Qur'an and the Arabian Nights in its "Critical Editions" series; and the Modern Language Association has so far only included volumes devoted to Modern Arabic Literature and to the Arabian Nights in its "Approaches to Teaching" series.

Julia Bray has spoken of the plurivocality of the Arabic literary tradition (see Live). I daresay those many voices belong neither in a "corpus," nor a "canon," nor an "anthology," but in a conversation. The guest editors of this special issue note in their "Preface" that world literature can inter alia be considered a process of translation, circulation and re-interpretation, an agora for dialogic national canons, a form of resistance to a politically-biased world market, an ethical way of being in the world, or a list of best works. The Library of Arabic Literature is also that process, that agora, that resistance, that ethic and, howsoever much it may remonstrate, maybe even includes (some of the best) works of world literature—of Arabic.

Works Cited

- Anonymous. *Tales of the Marvelous and News of the Strange*. Trans. Malcolm Lyons. London: Penguin Classics, 2014.
- Anonymous. *The Hundred and One Nights*. Ed. and trans. Bruce Fudge. Library of Arabic Literature. New York: NYU Press, 2016.
- Apter, Emily. *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*. London: Verso, 2013.
- Chaffee, Jessie. "The Translator Relay: Peter Cole." *wwB Daily*. 4 Dec. 2016. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- Creswell, Robyn. "Is Arabic Untranslatable?" *Public Culture* 28:3 (2016), 447–56.
- Gelder, G.J. van, trans. *Classical Arabic Literature: A Library of Arabic Literature Anthology*. Library of Arabic Literature. New York: NYU Press, 2013.
- Kennedy, Philip F. "The Library of Arabic Literature: A Proposal Submitted for Research Funding to the NYUAD Institute." Library of Arabic Literature Archive, 2009.
- al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī. *Selections from the Art of Party-Crashing*. Trans. and illustr. Emily Selove. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2012.
- LAL Handbook for Editor-Translators. Library of Arabic Literature. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- "LAL Notes." Jul. 14, 2010. Library of Arabic Literature Archive.
- Live from All Souls College, Oxford: A Workshop on the Library of Arabic Literature. Library of Arabic Literature. 12 May 2015. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- Loeb Classical Library. "The Founder." Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- Lynx-Qualey, Marcia. "Someone Crazy Enough to Translate al-Mutanabbi." *Arabic Literature in English*. 1 May 2013. Web. 1 Jul. 2017.

- Lynx-Qualey, Marcia. "Philip Kennedy: These Books Shouldn't Just Hide on A Shelf." Library of Arabic Literature. 9 Jul. 2013. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- Lynx-Qualey, Marcia. "Library of Arabic Literature Board on "Translating the Untranslatable." Arabic Literature in English. 20 Aug. 2013. Web. 1 Jul. 2017.
- Lynx-Qualey, Marcia. "On Collaboratively." Arabic Literature in English. 14 Nov. 2013. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- Lynx-Qualey, Marcia. "'Consorts of the Caliphs': History Through the Writings of 39 Women." Arabic Literature in English. 30 Apr. 2015. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- Lynx-Qualey, Marcia. "Re-membering: How to Assemble a Corpus of Classical Arabic Literature." Library of Arabic Literature. 15 Jun. 2015. Web. 11 Jul. 2017.
- Lynx-Qualey, Marcia. "'His Voice Really Speaks to Us Directly Now': Tahera Qutbuddin on Translating Mutanabbi with the Library of Arabic Literature." Arabic Literature in English. 20 Apr. 2016. Web. 1 Jul. 2017.
- Montgomery, James E. "A Note on the Text." In Ibn Faḍlān, *Mission to the Volga*, in *Two Travel Books*, ed. and trans. Tim Mackintosh-Smith and James E. Montgomery. Library of Arabic Literature. New York: NYU Press, 2014, 180–7.
- al-Nuwayrī, Shihāb al-Din. *Ultimate Ambition in the Arts of Erudition*. Trans. Elias Muhanna. Penguin Classics. London: Penguin, 2016.
- Rogers, Gayle. "Translation." In *A New Vocabulary for Global Modernism*, eds. Eric Hayot and Rebecca L. Walkowitz. Modernist Latitudes. New York: Columbia UP, 2016, 248–62.
- Toorawa, Shawkat M. "Note on the Translation." In *Consorts of the Caliphs: Women and the Court of Baghdad*, ed. Shawkat M. Toorawa. Trans. the Editors of the Library of Arabic Literature. Library of Arabic Literature. New York: NYU Press, 2015, xxxiv–vi.
- Yāqūt. *Muʿjam al-udabāʾ*, 20 vols. Cairo: Dār al-Maʾmūn, 1936–38, repr. Cairo: Dār al-Fikr, 1980.
- Zadeh, Travis. "On Reading the Library of Arabic Literature." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 47 (2016), 307–35.