Dunn's *Adventures of Ibn Battūta* is to highlight all the problems and pitfalls of the text, as well as its felicities, and persuade us at the end that this great traveller must indeed be taken at least as seriously as Marco Polo himself.

University of Exeter IAN RICHARD NETTON

Abdullah al-UDHARI, trans., *Victims of a Map*. London: Al Saqi Books, 1984. 167 pp.

If the object of this anthology of previously untranslated poems by Mahmud Darwish, Samih al-Qasim and Adonis is "to provide English-speaking readers with a sense of the frontiers of Arab poetry today" (p.8), then al-Udhari has succeeded, perhaps even admirably, in bringing to this readership a selection of some of the most urgent and impassioned verse by three of the Arab world's most skilful and heeded poets. Al-Udhari has brought together in one volume fifteen poems by each poet which reflect each one's individual use of the poetic tools at his disposal, his particular use of language, his use of symbols to illustrate the nature of the condition of the Palestinians and, particularly in Adonis' case, of the entire Arab world. One cannot, however, take seriously the assertion on the back cover that because of the facing Arabic text "this anthology [is] a powerful learning tool for students of Arabic". Indeed, a number of the translations suffer from random re-arrangement with no attention to the form of the originals, from patently unacceptable renditions, and from misreadings and oversights that not only alter the original meanings, but violate them outright.

After a brief introduction, emphasising the primacy of poetry in the Arab literary tradition and explaining the selections, expressing "the fate not only of Arabs or Palestinians, but also of humanity itself trapped in a contemporary tragedy" (p. 7), the major section of the book, "the Poems", begins. Mahmud Darwish's poems are preceded by a biographical note, far more interesting than the biographical notices to which we have become accustomed in previous anthologies for its detail and inclusion of observations by the poet himself about his art and his decision to write. The first thirteen Darwish poems are, the author tells us, collected for the first time in book form in Arabic. No copyright or bibliographical information, however, is provided for any of the poems in the entire collection. This makes it difficult for the Arabic reader to locate the sources from which the original versions come and their dates of composition. Whereas this may be an oversight on the part of the publishers, it is a very unfortunate one. The English reader is a little more fortunate: on what would have been the copyright page is the following acknowledgement "Some of these poems were first published in the following magazines: "*Stand, MPT, South, TR, South East Arts Review* and *Index*".

All of the Darwish poems are typically Darwish and contain the themes we have come to expect from him, but the language is not strained or trite. He has matured since his younger days and continues to produce poetry of a high caliber. The symbols of wheat, dreams, rocks, songs, clouds, and hope are still very much in evidence. As with all good poets, however, Darwish manages to forge these familiar symbols into a new language, immediate and effective. The

first poem, "The Earth is Closing On Us" (pp. 12-13), epitomizes the plight of the expatriated and disenfranchised Palestinian. His banishment is not only from that which he may call a homeland but from land itself:

Taḍīqu bi-nā 'l-arḍu, taḥshuruna fī 'l-mammarri 'l-akhīri, fa-nakhlaʿu aʿḍāʾanā kay namurra.
Taʿṣurunā 'l-arḍu, Yā laytanā qamḥuhā kay namūta wa naḥyā.

The earth is closing on us , pushing us through the last passage, and we tear off our limbs to pass through.
The earth is squeezing us. I wish we were its wheat so we could die and live again.

The ejected Palestinian must seek solace in that which is living, that which is life, the grain of wheat:

...aʿtinā ḥabbata 'l-qumḥi ya ḥulmanā.
(*"Nakhāfu ʿalā 'l-ḥulmi"*, p. 16)
...Give us a grain of
wheat, our dream.
("We Fear for a Dream", p. 17)

But the road to this solace is the dream, it is the melody.

Utrukū laylatan li-'l-ghināʾ.
(*"ʿIndamā yadhhabu 'sh-shuhadāʾu ilā 'n-nawmi"*, p. 14)

Leave a night
for singing.
("When the Martyrs Go to Sleep", p. 15)

A fī mithli hādhā 'n-nashīdi nuwassidu ḥulman ...
(*"A-fī mithli hādhā 'n-nashīdi"*, p. 24)

Is it in such a song we cushion a dream ...
("Is it in Such a Song?", p. 25)

And despite the "darkness of the clouds" (p. 31) that hover over "a country that does not hang a special sun over us" (p. 33), "over an airport" (p. 47), an unidentified sort of every-airport, there is hope.

Hunā naḥnu, ʿammā qalīlin sa-nuthqibu hādhā 'l-ḥiṣāra, wa-ʿammā qalīlin nuḥarriru ghayma
wa-narḥalu fīnā.
(*"Hunā naḥnu qurba hunāka"*, p. 34)

We are here, and in a moment we'll explode this siege, and in a moment we'll free a cloud,
And travel within ourselves.
("We Are Here Near There", p. 35)

With the exception of "The Wandering Guitar Player", the Darwish poems are quite well translated. We can only applaud the rentention of the tone of the Arabic in the translation of

Uhanniʾuhum bi-'s-salāmati min ḥādithi 'l-mustaḥīli, wa-min qīmati 'l-madhbaḥi 'l-fāʾiḍati.
(*"ʿIndamā yadhhabu 'sh-shuhādaʾu ilā 'n-nawmi"*, p. 14)

into

I congratulate them on their safety from the incredible event, from the surplus-value of the slaughter.
("When the Martyrs Go to Sleep", p. 15)

Indeed, in the case of "Give Birth to Me Again That I May Know" (pp. 20-21), and "We Travel Like Other People" (pp. 30-31) for example, the entire translations are superb. It is most unfortunate that, occasionally, blunders, some quite serious, some less so, must appear and taint the quality of the renditions. In "A Gypsy Melody" (pp. 26-29), al-Udhari has "And the country is far away," for "*bilādun baʿīdatun*" (p. 27) and "The silence" for "*wa ṣamtu*" (p. 27), not so much a violation of the Arabic as an unexplained lapse into the definite in English when the Arabic has quite clearly remained indefinite. This mistake takes on serious proportions in "Athens Airport" (pp. 36-37) where the characters in the poem, embodying the various strata of society, are referred to as "*al-muwaẓẓafu*", "*al-muthaqqafu*", "*al-adību*", "*al-muqātilu*", and so on. The translator chooses to make these "An employee", "An intellectual", "A writer", "A fighter", thereby removing the sense of the everyman that these people represent in the definite.

"The Wandering Guitar Player" (pp. 40-45) is not well translated in parts. "*Yā ṣadīqī, ayyuhā 'l-gītāru*" is lamely rendered "Guitar friend". Later,

ʿāzifu 'l-gītāri yaʾtī
fī 'l-layālī 'l-qādimati
ʿindamā yanṣarifu 'n-nāsu ilā jamʿi tawāqīʿi 'l-junūdi.

becomes

The guitar player is coming
Tomorrow night
When people go to collect soldier's signatures

instead of a more lyrically and semantically faithful:

The Guitar player shall come
In the coming nights
When people shall go forth to gather the signatures of the soldiers.

And "Roaring" is a feeble "*ṣārikhan milʾa ʾz-zawābiʿ*" (p. 44). We find other errors in the Arabic that appear on the facing pages, typographical errors. The "*khudhīnī...*", line 9 of page 40, should read "*khudhnī*" in the masculine; the two "*nuʿallamakum*" on page 34 should read "*nuʿallimakum*"; and there should be no *tanwīn* on "*ḥijāratuhu*", line 2, page 32.

The Samih al-Qasim selection is, for the most part, a series of very short poems, all of which are savage indictments on the oppressing forces that have sought to silence and mute the Palestinian voice, whether external or internal.

kāna fi waddī an usmiʿakum
qiṣṣatan ʿan ʿandalībin mayyiti
kāna fi waddī an usmiʿakum
qiṣṣatan....
law lam yaquṣṣū shafatī!
(*"al-Shafatu 'l-maqṣūṣatu"*, p. 52)

I would have liked to tell you
The story of a nightingale that died.
I would have liked to tell you
The story...
Had they not slit my lips.
("Slit Lips", p. 53)

His images are fresh and arresting. The loss and lack of identity that Darwish attacked in his celebrated "*Biṭāqa Huwiyya*" ("Identity Card") are re-examined in "Travel Tickets" (pp. 58-59) and in "How I Became an Article" (pp. 70-71). The lack of direction and closure from which he and his people suffer are described in "Confession at Midday" (pp. 56-57) and in the terse "Eternity" (pp. 78-79):

tatabaddalu 'l-awrāqu min ānin li-ān
lākinna jidhʿa 's-sindiyān..

Leaves fall from time to time
But the trunk of the oak tree..

The familiar images are supplemented by a new series of symbols: "Bats: some kind of apparatus" (p. 61), "the city square" (p. 62), "a strange colourless cloud" (p. 75), "jasmine" (pp. 75 and 81). Only at the last poem, "The Clock on the Wall" (pp. 84-85), can be levelled Badawi's accusation that, because of overproductivity, the poetry might sound "too facile and mechanical" (M.M. Badawi, *A Critical Introduction to Modern Arabic Poetry*, Cambridge: CUP, 1975, 222).

Most of the translations do justice to the original but in at least two cases, "Travel Tickets" (pp. 58-59) and "The Story of a City" (pp. 64-75), the English is a travesty of the Arabic. "*Tadhākiru safarin*" is reduced from an eleven-line poem in the Arabic to a seven-line one in English; the translator pays no attention to the passive mood, the absence of a second person addressee in the opening lines and the explicitly stated addressee in the closing lines; and the form of the poem is completely ignored. There is neither justification nor excuse for changing

wa ʿindamā uqtalu fī yawmin mina 'l-ayyām
sa-yaʿthiru 'l-qātilu fī jaybatī
ʿalā tadhākiri 's-safar

to

One day you kill me
You'll find in my pocket
Travel tickets

or for condensing

(arjūka allā tuḥmila 't-tadhākir
ya qāṭiliya 'l-ʿazīz
arjūka an tusāfir..)

to

Don't waste the tickets

In the opening to "Story of the City", "*kānat hunāka madīnatun zarqā'/taḥlumu bu-'l-ajānib*" is reduced to "A blue city/Dreamt of tourists", and it does not get better. The English version is a grotesque violation of the Arabic. Equally deplorable is the abbreviation of the names of the speakers in the dialogue of the following poem. "Conversation Between an Ear of Corn and a Jerusalem Rose Thorn" (pp. 66-69). After initially spelling out *Ear of Corn* for "*as-Sunbulatu*" and *Jerusalem Rose Thorn* for "*Shawkatu 'l-qundūli*", the poet, or perhaps the publishers, saw fit to use *EC* and *JRT*. If it is excused on the grounds of saving space, it is not excusable at the end of the poem where

(yabqa 'r-ramādu, wa-sunbulatun wa-shawkatu qundūlin ʿalā 'l-ufuqi)

becomes

(Ashes, EC & JRT on the horizon)

Other infelicities include the unexplained deviations in English from the form of the Arabic, the abandonment of the opening "*anā*" in every line of "Confession at Midday", for example, and a few misreadings and omissions. In "Bats" (pp. 60-61), "*al-khafāfīshu ʿalā nāfidhatī*" is rendered "Bats on the window"; in "The Story of the Unknown Man" (pp. 72-75), "*wa ṣāra yā mā ṣāra fī yawmin mina 'l-ayyām/ in sāra li-'l-amām*" becomes "One day". There are, at least, no typographical errors in the al-Qasim section.

The third poet of the collection is ʿAlī Aḥmad Saʿīd, or, as he is better known, Adonis. Almost half the book is devoted to him and deservedly so since he is perhaps the most "innovatory contemporary Arab poet" (p. 7) writing today, though some do take him to task for occasional lapses into obscurism. He is the visionary, to coin from his own terminology, of a "new poetry". For Adonis, words must leap outside existing comprehensions, they must become "a womb with a new fertility" (*raḥimun li-khiṣbin jadīdin*).

Adonis' innovative use of words is well represented by al-Udhari's selections. His enduring concern with writing and naming, for example, has not become clichéd and jaded.

tanhuḍu fī jasadī arḍun
tahmusu li-ayyāmī an takūna shabābīkahā
tuʿallimu khaṭawātī an taṣīra bi-'smihā rasā'ila
wa-ʿaṣāfīr,
(*"Ughniyyatun"*, p. 100)

The earth rises in my body
And tells my days to be its windows

And teaches my steps its name so they can be its letters
And birds.
("Song", p. 101)

and

kitāb
yuktabu fī aḥshā'i ghurāb
(*"Mir'ātun li'l-qarni 'l-ᶜishrīna"*, p. 90)

A book
Written on the belly of a crow
("A Mirror for the Twentieth Century", p. 91)

And from section 29 of "The Desert" (pp. 135-165):

yahbuṭu 'l-laylu [hadha
waraqun kāna aᶜṭāhu li 'l-ḥibr—[ḥibri 's-ṣabāḥi 'l-ladhī lam yaji']
(*"aṣ-Ṣaḥrā'u"*, p. 156)

The night descends (these are the papers he gave to the ink—
morning's ink that never came)
("The Desert", p. 157)

The nine lines of section 31 of the very same poem (pp. 160-161) all begin with "*Kataba 'l-qaṣīdata*" incorrectly rendered "He wrote in a poem". Other familiar Adonis symbols abound: the wound, mirrors (including three poems with this word in the title), dreams, clouds, history, the sun, heads, the wind, weapons, the city and so on. The following lines are from page 114 and 115 of "The Wound" (pp. 110-117):

law kāna lī fī waṭani 'l-aḥlāmi wa-'l-marāyā
marāfi'un, law kāna lī safīna,
law anna lī baqāyā
madīnatin law anna lī madīna
fī waṭani 'l-aṭfāli wa-'l-bukā'

la-ṣughtu hadhā kullahu li'l-jurḥ
ughniyatun ka-'r-rumḥ
takhtariqu 'l-ashjāra wa-'l-ḥijāra wa-'s-samā'
layyinatan ka-'l-mā'
jāmiḥatan madhhūlatan ka-'l-fatḥ

If I had havens in a country of mirrors and dreams,
If I had a ship,
If I had the remains of a city,
Or a city
In a country of children and weeping

I'd have made out of all this for the wound
A song like a spear
Piercing trees, stones and heaven,
And soft as water,
Overpowering and amazing like a conquest.
(p. 115)

The image of the city, which has long pre-occupied Adonis and which is the subject of other long poems such as "*Qabr min ajli New York*" and "*Muqaddima li-Tā'rīkh Mulūk aṭ-Ṭawā'if*", is the subject of the 209-line poem "The Desert". This is a previously unpublished poem, the subject of which is Adonis' native Beirut, subtitled "The Diary of Beirut Under Siege, 1982". It is admirably translated by al-Udhari except in the case of the first of the thirty-four sections into which the poem is divided:

..fī zamānin
yuṣāriḥunī: lasta minnī.
wa-uṣāriḥuhu: lastu minka, wa-ajhadu an afhamahu
wa-anā 'l-āna ṭayfun
yatasharradu fī ghābatin
dākhila 'l-jumjuma

My era tells me bluntly:
You do not belong.
I answer bluntly:
I do not belong,
I try to understand *you.*
Now I am a shadow
Lost in the forest
Of a skull.
(*The italics are my own, showing the mistranslations*)

Of the remaining translations only "The Pearl (Dream-Mirror)" (pp. 128-133) "The Golden Age" (pp. 98-99) and "Psalm" (pp. 106-109) are well translated. The rest suffer from misreadings, unjustified re-arrangements and omissions. In "A Mirror for the Executioner" (pp. 88-89), "*sa-yakūnu jilduka lī basāṭan/sa-yakūnu ajmala mukhmalin*" is pathetically and unlyrically reduced to 'Your velvet skin/Will be my carpet.'' In "Song" (pp. 100-103), the elucidating "Bless it with the Koran's praise of the Madonna" is counteracted by the opaque "Fine and green like Khadir's colt", meaningless to the English reader. A few lines later we are presented with "As distant as our souls/As distant as a journey into the space of the soul" for "*baynanā buᶜdu 'r-rūḥi/baynanā 'l-aᶜmāqu wa 's-safaru fi faḍā'i 'l-aᶜmāqi*". In "The Wound", "*fī ahdābinā*" is read "in your eyelashes" and the closing lines

wa-dhālika 's-siḥru 'l-ladhī ramathu
ᶜaynāka fī 'l-mamāliki 'l-akhīra.
marra ᶜalayhi 'l-jurḥ,
marra fa-lam yatruk lahu shirāᶜan
yaghwī, wa-lam yatruk lahu jazīra.

transform into

The wound is beyond the fate
Your eyes cast
On the lost civilizations
It's left no sails
Nor islands.

The hitherto faithful "The New Noah" (pp. 120-125) is ruined by the careless translation of "*yaqūlu lī yā nūhu anqidh lanā/al-ahyā'a*" as "And Noah asked

me: 'Save the living' '', ''*Ayyuhā 'l-ummu 'l-latī taskharu/min ḥubbī wa maqtī*'', the opening lines of ''The Seven Days'' (pp. 126-127), become the lacklustre ''Mother, do not mock/My love, my hate,'' Despite the occasional stray diacritical mark, the only serious typographical error is ''*ḥaqala*'' for ''*ḥamala*'' in line one of ''Psalm''. All in all, the Adonis selections suffer from the most problems. The reasons for this are not clear: the errors do not seem to be the product of ignorance, perhaps they are the price of haste.

Al-Udhari has provided us with some top-flight poetry by three of the veritable masters. If his translations leave a little to be desired, so be it: his anthology can only serve to spur other scholars to translate and retranslate these and other works. After all, as Bonnefoy has said, we translate to better understand a text.

University of Pennsylvania SHAWKAT M. TOORAWA