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RECOVERING THE SELF FROM THE OTHER: ARABS AND ISLAM IN CONTEMPORARY ARABIC TRANSLATIONS OF EUROPEAN LITERATURE*

Abstract

When a work of European literature is translated into Arabic, the language of a predominantly Islamic culture, terms referring to Arabs as a people or Muslims as a religious community, the name of Muhammad as the Prophet of Islam, etc., cease to be foreign and exotic, to become local and familiar. The present analysis of contemporary Arabic translations of Dante's *La Divina Commedia*, Cervantes' *Don Quijote* and Scott's *Ivanhoe,* shows that these elements are not always simply returned to their native culture if the original text represents them in a negative, Eurocentric way, which can even be considered blasphemous by Muslims, but are subject to more or less significant ideologically motivated transformations. Instead of straightforward restitution to the native culture, what takes place is a kind of annexation of texts which consists in replacing the negatively portrayed "Other" by a positively, or at least neutrally, represented "We". Such manipulations may be explicit, i.e. signalled in footnotes, or tacit. In some cases, anti-Islamic passages become even sympathetic towards Islam when translated into Arabic. In this way the authors of Arabic translations liberate the texts from the dominating Western perspective and adapt them to their own vision of the world. What appears as manipulation and censorship from the "Western" point of view may be perceived in an entirely different manner inside the Arabo-Islamic culture, for instance as a correction of obvious factual errors.

Keywords: translation, manipulation, domestication, Arabic, Arabs, Islam

Ever since Europe, in the simplified meaning of the word, i.e., the Christian world or the West, encountered Islam, and the Arab world, various representations of Arabs and Muslims have developed in European literatures. Some of them were far removed from reality, which may be due to insufficient background knowledge or shoddy fact-checking. As a result, Arabs were equated with Muslims and often considered the same as Turks, the whole group being labelled Saracens. However, untruthful depictions of Arabs and Islamic believers were often expressive of negative attitudes of their authors, who sought to represent hostile peoples and denominations as inferior beings, heretics, pagans, barbarians, or creatures devoid of any moral principles.

These distorted depictions proliferate in the works of European literature whose outreach goes well beyond the Old Continent. As such they also attract interest from the Arab world, which is rightly known as predominantly Muslim.[1] The efforts to translate literatures of other nations, including fiction, into Arabic have intensified in the 20th and 21st centuries. Arab publishers are particularly intrigued by the texts which describe the Arab world: its history, religion, culture, etc. Richard Jacquemond (1992: 146) focuses solely on the Egyptian context, but his analysis may be extrapolated onto other Arab nations; he points out that in many cases works selected for translation are not meant to provide access to Western thought. On the contrary, it is "a way for the national culture to examine and reassure itself in the other's mirror". As they strive to discover how they are perceived by others, in this particular case by Europeans, Arabs and Muslims quite often encounter unsavoury depictions of their world. Such depictions can reach the Arab and Muslim readership only if they read relevant works in the original or if they have been preserved in translation.

In many cases, depictions provided by translators depart from the original. This is partly because one of the agents involved in the translation process, be it a translator, editor, or patron, follows their views and sensitivities or accommodates the views and sensitivities of certain groups or entire communities by introducing the target-language perspective in translation. This predominantly concerns the issues of religion, mainly sacred values, such as the orthodox notions of God or the Prophet Muhammad. That said,

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[1] Because of this and also because the authors of the works discussed in this article equated Arabs with Muslims, I shall use the "Arabs and Muslims" category, which is an umbrella term for these two heterogeneous groups. However, the term must not obscure the fact that contemporary Arabs are predominantly Muslim, while contemporary Muslims are predominantly non-Arab.

issues of lesser importance may also be manipulated in translation. The article aims to discuss these larger or smaller modifications of the negative depictions of Arabs and Muslims in Arabic translation based on three works of European literature: *La Divina Commedia* by Dante, *Don Quijote* by Cervantes, and *Ivanhoe* by Walter Scott.

1. *La Divina Commedia* by Dante Alighieri

The analysis is based on two Arabic translations of Dante's *La Divina Commedia* (*DA*) which I found available:[2] *al-Kūmīdiyā al-Ilāhiyya* by Ḥasan ʿUthmān (Egypt) from 1959 (*ḤU*) and by Kāẓim Jihād (Iraq) from 2002 (*KJ*). Both translations were provided with extended forewords which praise Dante as a thinker and writer, notwithstanding the fact that his work may be labelled openly anti-Muslim. Dante followed his *zeitgeist* in that he considered Muhammad a schismatic who caused dissent in the Christian realm (Samarrai 1999: 137). In Canto 28 (lines 22–64), the Prophet Muhammad and the fourth Caliph Ali, his cousin and son-in-law, who brought about a rift in the Islamic realm, are condemned, as "the sowers of dissension and scandal" (*seminator di scandalo e di scisma*, line 34), to torment, their bodies torn apart and depicted in unsightly detail. Both figures are mentioned by name:

> *vedi come storpiato è Maometto!*
> *Dinanzi a me sen va piangendo Alí* (*DA* 283–284)

> See now how maimed Mohammed is! And he
> who walks and weeps before me is Ali[3]

This Islam-hating depiction was removed from both translations. Forty-two lines were deleted in ʿUthmān's translation, while Jihād's version passed over or modified all the elements suggestive of Muhammad and Muslims:

> *wa-qāl lī: anā* (…), *unẓur kayfa utlaf!*

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[2] The list of the works analysed in the study and full names of their authors and/or translators is provided at the end of the article.

[3] The English translation of the quotations is provided by the translator (B.S.) based on the author's translations of Arabic passages into Polish or English translations of *La Divina Commedia* and *Don Quijote* provided in the references. The translation was modified to illustrate the points made by the author.

unẓur kayfa butirat aʿḍāʾī!
wa-ibn ʿammī yamḍī bākiyan amāmī (*KJ* 368; original ellipsis)

He said to me: 'I am (…) See how I am being destroyed!
See how my limbs have been maimed!
And my cousin walks and weeps before me.

Muhammad's name was dotted out, while Ali's name was supplanted with the phrase *ibn ʿammī*, "my cousin". Instead of Muhammad, who reappears in line 62 of the original, the translation features the abstract phrase *al-muʿadhdhab*, "the tormented one" (*KJ* 370). Since the changes are not annotated in the Arabic translation, the lay readership are rather unlikely to find out who they actually refer to. No similar changes were made in translation in passages depicting other figures from the Arab and Muslim world, such as Saladin, Averroes, and Avicenna, who were placed in Limbo (Canto 4) with other prominent figures dating back to pre-Christian times. Additionally, in footnote 77 ʿUthmān (*ḤU* 124) points out that Dante's decision to place Saladin in the company of ancient wise men is a marker of respect on his part. As a result, his readers may come to a conclusion that *The Divine Comedy* expressed favourable attitudes towards Islam.

2. *Don Quijote* by Miguel Cervantes

Cervantes' *El Ingenioso Hidalgo Don Quijote de la Mancha* (*MC*) is particularly immersed in the Arab and Muslim world. Cervantes stood in the Battle of Lepanto (1571) against the Muslim Ottoman Turks; he spent five years in captivity in Algiers. Nonetheless, as pointed out by Emilio González Ferrín (2007: 556), the book is suggestive of empathy towards Muslims (Moriscoes) and a nostalgia for "banished Spain" (*España expulsada*). It is worth noting that in the narrator's account much of the book was originally written in Arabic (*MC* 146–147) by the Arab historian Cide Hamete Benengeli,[4] the Spanish version being its translation (the Arabic translation

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[4] While Cide Hamete may probably be deciphered as al-Sayyid Ḥāmid, the rest of the name remains a mystery. Badawī provides a back translation into Arabic as *ibn al-Ayyilī*, "son of the Cervine" (AB I, 95), from the Arabic *ayyil*, "hart", following José Antonio Conde's suggestion, which Clemencín shared in his edition of *Don Quijote* (MCS 201). According to this conjecture, Benengeli alludes to Cervantes' name, which derives from the

of *Don Quijote* thus becoming a back translation into the original). That said, the novel features anti-Muslim and anti-Arab content. I am going to discuss two issues in the Arabic translation (*AB*), which ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Badawī (1917–2002), an eminent Egyptian humanist, published in 1998. Modified in translation, relevant passages address the issue of Muhammad's representations and religious conversion.

The name of the Prophet, in its Spanish wording *Mahoma*, figures four times in the original, including three passages which distort the image of Islam. The first passage suggests that Muslims worship statues of the Prophet:

> *robó aquel ídolo de Mahoma que era todo de oro* (*MC* 88)
> he stole that image of Mahomet which (…) was entirely of gold

> *li-yasriq timthāl Muḥammad* (…) *wa-kāna hādhā al-timthāl min khāliṣ al-dha-hab* (*AB* I, 35)
> to steal the statue of Muhammad, which was made of pure gold.

The translator offers a faithful rendition, while adding a comment in the footnote. He goes on to explain that in Cervantes' times, which were marked by Christian-Muslim conflict, such notions of Islam were prevalent in Spain and that fanatic Christian attitudes (*al-taʿaṣṣub al-masīḥī*), which often resulted in mendacious depictions of Islam, can be found throughout the book. The second mention of Muhammad in MC is that of a false miracle-worker:

> *historia* (…) *no más verdadera que los milagros de Mahoma* (*MC* 112)
> a story not a whit truer than the miracles of Mahomet

> *ḥikāya* (…) *laysat aṣdaq min baʿḍ al-muʿjizāt* (*AB* I, 60)
> a story not a whit truer than some miracles.

In the passage, the translator deleted the name of Muhammad while adding in the footnote: "we have corrected the text and deleted an obscene word" (‘*addalnā fī al-naṣṣ bi-ḥadhf kalima nābiya*). A similar procedure was used in the third passage, in which Muhammad is labelled a false prophet:

> *si no deja primero la ley de su falso profeta Mahoma* (*MC* 217)
> unless he first abandons the religion of his false prophet Mahomet

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Spanish *ciervo*, "hart". A different hypothesis (also quoted by Badawī in his comments) was offered by Eguílaz y Yanguaz (1899: 132), who argues that the name stems from the Spanish *berenjena*, "aubergine". Several other hypotheses were offered to resolve the issue.

illā idhā takhallā ʿan sharīʿat nabīhi (*AB* I, 161)
unless he first relinquishes the law of his prophet.

The operation is annotated in the footnote, where the translator adds that the original contains expressions redolent of "criminal fanaticism", which readers might be better off to ignore.

The second manipulation in the Arabic translation concerns the issue of conversion, especially from Christianity to Islam. The Spanish original describes the act of conversion to Islam with the verb *renegar*, "to renounce faith", while someone who does this is called a "renegade" (*renegado*). In MC, the word renegade is used to describe people who converted to Islam in Turkish captivity; their conversion had different reasons and was often feigned. For Cervantes' contemporaries, the word was unambiguously pejorative. This derogatory overtone was either neutralised or ameliorated in Badawī's translation. The neutralisation process is best seen in the following passages:

renegó (*MC* 461)
he renounced his faith

taḥawwal ʿan dīnihi wa-iʿtanaq al-islām (*AB* II, 69)
he renounced his faith and adopted Islam

alguna cristiana renegada (*MC* 465)
renegade Christian

naṣrāniyya aslamat (*AB* II, 71)
a female Christian converted to Islam.

The act of renouncing one's faith becomes a conversion to the one and only faith in ameliorative translation. Accordingly, the translator renders words such as *renegar* and *renegado* with the verb *ihtadā* and the participle *muhtadī*. The verb means "to be rightly guided", "to be led on the right way", "to find one's way back (…) to the true faith" (Wehr 1974:1023). One of the authoritative dictionaries defines *muhtadī* as "a convert to Islam" (*converso al islam*, Corriente 2005: 1231). The translator sometimes clarifies the meaning with the expression *ilā al-islām*, "to Islam", e.g. *cristiana renegada* (*MC* 465), "renegade Christian woman" is translated as *naṣrāniyya ihtadat ilā al-islām*, "a female Christian who has been led on the right way to Islam"

(*AB* II, 71).[5] Thus, the reader in Arabic is offered a commendable depiction of a religious convert rather that a renegade or dissenter. The image may strike one as somewhat peculiar, given the Christian author of the novel. However, the translation fails in consistency. The translator makes surprising choices in four passages: *muhtadī* creates an oxymoron when combined with *murtadd*, which denotes "a renegade, dissenter, or apostate" (*MC* 482/*AB* II, 85, three times, and *MC* 488/*AB* II, 89).

In *MC*, Arabs are usually referred to with the word *moro*, and only rarely with terms such as *arábigo* or *alárabe*. While denoting Arabs, the word in fact also refers to Berbers,[6] who inhabited the Spanish zone of interest and the setting of Cervantes' novel, namely the Iberian Peninsula and the Maghreb. The translator usually renders *moro* as *Maghribī*, "a Maghrebi, an inhabitant of the Maghreb (i.e. the western part of the Arab world)," and only rarely as *Muslim*, "Muslim" or *Marrākushī*, "Moroccan". One might venture the following generalisation: each time MC paints Arabs in a negative light, the translator strives to detach from the original depiction in one way or another. In one passage the translator ameliorates a critical remark about Arabs in general:

> *sino haber sido su autor arábigo, siendo muy propio de los de aquella nación ser mentirosos* (*MC* 148)
> the author was an Arab, and Arabs are all known as a nation of liars
>
> *anna muʾallifahā min al-ʿArab, wa-al-kidhb shāʾiʿ jiddan baynahum* (*AB* I, 96)
> the author was an Arab, and lies are common among Arabs.

While the original suggests that all Arabs are liars, the Arabic version says that lies are common among Arabs, i.e., a significant proportion of Arabs are liars.

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[5] The translator also resorted to manipulation in passages describing conversion to Christianity. In the original, as one of the female protagonists converts to Christianity, this is described as a source of happiness, a transition from darkness to light, from death to life, and from suffering to glory (MC 483). All of these approbative symbols of conversion to Christianity were obliterated in the Arabic translation (AB II, 85).

[6] Clearly opposed to Turks, who are referred to as *turco*, cf. *no se dejan ver de ningún moro ni turco* (*MC* 473) "do not allow themselves to be seen by any Moor or Turk" and *el miedo que los moros a los turcos tienen* (*MC* 476–77), "the Moors (…) instinctively have a dread of the Turks".

As accusations are hurled against Cide Hamete Benengele, the translator finds it fitting to add a footnote in order to excuse himself for using the insulting *al-kalb*, "dog," an equivalent of the Spanish *galgo*, "hound":

y si algo bueno en ella faltare, para mí tengo que fue por culpa del galgo de su autor, antes que por falta del sujeto (*MC* 148)
if it be wanting in any good quality, I maintain it is the fault of its hound of an author and not the fault of the subject

wa-idhā kān yanquṣuhu shay' ḥasan, fa-i'tiqādī anā anna al-ghalṭa fī dhālika laysat ghalṭat al-mawḍū', bal ghalṭat hādhā al-mu'allif al-kalb (*AB* I, 96)
if it be wanting in any good quality, I maintain it is not the fault of the subject but the fault of its dog of an author.

In the footnote, the translator goes on to explain that Cervantes makes a reference to common insults which Spanish Christians and Muslims used to cast at each other at the time.

In a different passage, Badawī provides no rationale for his decision to render *moro* as *Maghribī*, instead of '*Arabī* or *Muslim*:

no te fíes de ningún moro, porque son todos marfuces (*MC* 467)
trust no Moor, for they are all perfidious

lā tathiq bi-ayy Maghribī, fa-sa-yakhda'ūnaka jamī'an (*AB* II, 73)
trust no Maghrebi, for they are all going to cheat you.

In so doing, the translator narrowed down the accusations of innate perfidiousness to the inhabitants of one (Western) part of the Arab world. Other Arab nations, including Egyptians (his compatriots), were left out of the picture.

In summary, the overview of Badawī's decisions as a translator demonstrates the usage of footnotes as a way to signal anti-Muslim and anti-Arab passages. In Badawī's opinion, however, this is hardly sufficient to castigate the entire work, which is a mirror reflection of the then present relations between Christianity and Islam or Europeans and Arabs. When translating religious passages, the translator felt entitled to deeply interfere with the original, not all of his modifications being suitably annotated.

3. *Ivanhoe* by Walter Scott

The story of Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe* (*WS*), first published in 1820, is set in 12th-century England. Arabs and Muslims are featured in the novel in two contexts: as the enemies of Christian Crusaders in Palestine and as prisoners brought to England by a Knight Templar. Overall, the novel is anti-Arab and anti-Islam in import. The Arabic translation (*MZ*) by Murād al-Zumar offers no foreword or annotations for the translator to inform the reader about departures from the original, which are quite frequent.

Walter Scott usually refers to Arabs as Saracens. The term, at least from the contemporary point of view, implies an identity which combines religion (Saracens are Muslims) and language (the Saracen language) (*WS* 72). In the Arabic translation, the word "Saracen" is usually rendered as *'Arabī*, "Arab" or *'Arab*, "Arabs". At times, however, especially in those passages which describe Crusaders as they gain the upper hand over Arab-Muslims, the word Saracen is either replaced with a more general *a'dā'*, "enemies" or the reference to a nation or religion is obliterated. Here are several examples:

> *has slain three hundred Saracens* (*WS* 198)
> *qatal thalātha-mi'a min al-a'dā'* (*MZ* 268)
> has slain three hundred enemies
>
> *a fierce destroyer of the Saracens* (*WS* 340)
> *shirrīr mudammir* (*MZ* 493)
> a fierce destroyer
>
> *sweet savour as the death of a Saracen* (*WS* 341)
> *madhāqan ḥulwan wa-thawāban 'amīman* (*MZ* 493)
> sweet savour and great merit
>
> *whose trade is to slay Saracens* (*WS* 258)
> *yaḥtarif al-qitāl fī Filasṭīn* (*MZ* 364)
> whose trade is to fight in Palestine.

The Arabic translation also passes over the insulting periphrastic depiction of Saracens:

> *The blood of these accursed dogs* (*WS* 353)
> *inna dimā'ahum* (*MZ* 512)
> their blood.

WS features three passages with references to the skin colour of Arabs (the prisoners of the Knight Templar), who are depicted as "black" or "swarthy". The reference was utterly deleted from the Arabic translation (*WS* 36/*MZ* 21, *WS* 207/*MZ* 281 and *WS* 209/ *MZ* 284). That said, references to swarthy or black complexion are retained whenever it defines Jews (*WS* 90/*MZ* 101), Turks (*WS* 235/*MZ* 324), and the Knight Templar (*WS* 63/ *MZ* 62); however, one reference to the swarthy complexion of the Knight Templar was also edited out (*WS* 38/*MZ* 23). This is interesting considering the fact that Arab culture draws a line between Arabs and blacks, who due to their skin colour and frequent enslavement[7] were often treated as inferior beings. One archetypical example, in this respect, can be found in the opening scene of *The Arabian Nights*, where it is clearly stated that Shah Zaman was cheated on by his wife with a black slave, which only aggravates the ruler's despair (*AN: 4*). This demonstrates how relative the perceptions of foreign communities through skin-colour lenses might be. Additionally, the translator's decision to edit out the relevant content reveals how sensitive this issue is in Arab culture.

Unambiguous references to Muslim religion, be they "Moslems" (*WS* 59), "Mahomedans" (*WS* 65), "Mussulman" (*WS* 72), and "Moslemah" (*WS* 363), are featured in the novel on a one-off basis and were all rendered as *Muslimūn*, "Muslims" (*MZ* 57, 64, 74, and 528, respectively). Apart from relatively neutral terms,[8] Scott also used negative expressions to describe Islamic believers: "infidels," "heathen", and "Paynim". In *MZ* this derogatory charge was retained in selected passages which describe Muslims as *kuffār*, "infidels, heathens" (singular *kāfir*), e.g. (*WS* 55/*MZ* 50), (*WS* 58/ *MZ* 54), (*WS* 361/*MZ* 524), with a term that is equivalent to the original, including the negative connotations it provokes. In many other passages, the negative charge was ameliorated, pejorative expressions replaced with their religion-neutral equivalents:

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[7] One interesting thing, in this context, is the word '*abd* and its semantic differences in Standard Arabic and its dialects. While in Standard Arabic the word denotes "servant, slave" (cf. the name '*Abd Allāh* "Servant of God"), in Syrian, Egyptian, and Moroccan dialects it also means "Negro" (with negative connotations) (el'-Massarani, Segal' 1978: 329 for the Syrian dialect, Hinds, Badawi 1986: 559 for the Egyptian dialect, Harrell 1966: 254 for the Moroccan dialect). This shows that enslavement and skin colour are treated as related notions in these dialects.

[8] "Relatively" so, since the English term "Mahomedans" is rejected by many Muslims: it suggests Muhammad is the major or sole object of worship in Islam.

predominating over heathen Turks and infidel Saracens (*WS* 39)
musayṭiran ʿalā al-aʿdāʾ (*MZ* 26)
predominating over enemies

against two armed heathens (*WS* 77)
diḍḍa shirrīrayn yaḥmilān silāḥan (*MZ* 82)
against two armed rogues

the very heathen Saracens (*WS* 60)
al-aʿrābiyyān (*MZ* 58)
the two Beduins

a Paynim (*WS* 173)
wāḥid min al-aʿdāʾ (*MZ* 228)
one of the enemies.

The Arabic translation of *WS* fails to craft a consistent picture of Muslims, as it either preserves negative depictions or ameliorates them. However, two references to Muslim religion were consistently corrected: the name "Mahound" and circumcision.

"Mahound" is a distorted English variant of the name "Mahomet", a Latinised appellation of the founder of Islam, whose Arabic designation is *Muḥammad*. In mediaeval Europe, Mahound was believed to be a Muslim idol. A notion whereby Muhammad, in whichever variant of his name, was a god or an idol, undermines the principal dogma of Islam, which believes in an indivisible God and Muhammad as his human prophet. The name *Mahound* produces negative connotations of Islam as a primitive and idolatrous religion, which is why it was presumably obliterated in translation. In one passage the reference was edited out:

the houris of old Mahound's paradise (*WS* 41)
ḥawārī al-janna (*MZ* 29)
the houris of the paradise.

Substitution was used in two other passages. In one instance, an expression undercutting the values of Islam, i.e., depicting Mahound-Muhammad as a wizard, was supplanted with an expression that makes no reference to the Prophet:

"Mahound's spell" (*WS* 173)
siḥr sāḥiratihi (*MZ* 228)
the spell of his [the Sultan's] sorceress

In the other, substitution was used to align the content of the novel with the values of the receiving culture. Accordingly, the name "Mahound" was replaced with *Muḥammad*. For the substitution to become meaningful, two interferences were necessary: "worshippers" turned into "followers", and the name of another allegedly Muslim deity, Termagaunt, was edited out in translation:

> the worshippers of Mahound and Termagaunt (*WS* 59)
> atbāʿ *Muḥammad* (*MZ* 57)
> the followers of Muhammad.

References to circumcision are another element that for religious reasons were manipulated in translation. Some of *WS*'s protagonists recall the custom whenever they make contemptuous remarks. Christians use the word "circumcised" as an insult, while Jews (and on one occasion also a Christian monk, who apparently uses the word as a metaphor meaning "impure, irreligious") use "uncircumcised" to the same effect. Presumably, since circumcision is practised by Muslims and is a prominent custom in Islam, the Arabic translation departs from the original by either editing out the references to circumcision or substituting them with other adjectives, which nonetheless carry the original value judgement. Accordingly, "circumcised slave" turns into "miserable slave", *al-ʿabd al-dhalīl* (*WS* 146/*MZ* 187) in Arabic, "circumcised Hebrew" turns into "foul Jew", *Yahūdī danīʾ* (*WS* 378/*MZ* 550), "uncircumcised hands" are rendered as "(their) filthy hands" *aydīhim al-danisa* (*WS* 259/*MZ* 265), and "uncircumcised Philistine" turns into "Philistine" *al-Filasṭīnī* (*WS* 107/*MZ* 127).[9]

The Arabic translation of *WS* is similar to *AB* in that the issue of conversion, or more specifically, return to Islam, was manipulated. The original uses the verb *relapse* "to slip or fall back into a former worse state" (Merriam-Webster) which pictures Islam as an errant religion:

> he condemned to the stake Hamet Alfagi, a convert who relapsed to the Moslem faith (WS 357).

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[9] It is worth noting a similar interference in Khalīl Muṭrān's translation of Shakespeare's *Othello* into Arabic. The translator edited out the following expression (*KhM* 853) "circumcisèd dog" (Act 5, Scene 2, *WSh* 364) referring to a Turk, *ipso facto* a Muslim. The same decision was made in the translation of *Othello* by Jabrā Ibrāhīm Jabrā (Daḥbūr 2006). Interestingly, both Muṭrān and Jabrā were Christian.

MZ features an expression devoid of value judgement:

bi-iḥrāq Ḥāmid al-Fajjī li-iʿtināqihi al-dīn al-islāmī (*MZ* 518)
by the burning of Hamid al-Fagi for adopting the Muslim faith.

As he rendered *Ivanhoe* into Arabic, Murād al-Zumar heavily interfered with the original, in order to obliterate virtually all the elements which might paint a negative picture of Islam and most of the negative references about Arabs (Saracens), including mentions of a darker skin colour. He stands out from the other two authors in that he fails to annotate any of these interferences. The Arabic readership, who receive a novel distilled of anti-Arab and anti-Muslim content, if they fail to consult the original, are highly unlikely to realise that a range of essential information on the world view of the time was obliterated in translation. The loss is all the more acute as the words edited out by the translator sound perfectly natural in the mouths of those who utter them in the original and add to their image.

Conclusions

The Arabic translations discussed in this study involve the following interventions against openly anti-Islamic content or content that may be unfavourable to Muslims, against the spirit of Islam,[10] or in rare cases damaging to the reputation of the Arab community: (i) editing out the content, (ii) substituting it with neutral content or content elevating the target language culture, or (iii) signalling it at the meta-level of the translation in the footnote. With faithfulness as the ultimate criterion, a negative impact must be attributed to operations such as deleting anti-Arab or anti-Muslim content or replacing it with the content which is more convenient to the Arab or Muslim readership and aligned with their culturally-driven poetics and ideology (a phenomenon previously known to the Arab world, cf. Jacquemond 1992: 141–142), either of the translators' own accord or under the pressure of their patrons, i.e., forces (individuals or institutions) imposing their ideas of literature in a given cultural context (Lefevere 1992: 11–25, notably 14–15). As a result, the target-language audience develop a false

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[10] Schreiber mentions religiously motivated purifications; however, only in the Christian context (1993: 278).

notion of the work they read in translation and its author; e.g. Dante, who displayed hostile attitudes to Islam, turns out to be in favour of the religion.[11] With cognitive impoverishment at play, the Arab readership have no chance to explore the actual attitude of the author to their culture. However, this unfaithful rendition of the original allows a faithful representation of the system of values which shape the translators' national, ethnic, or religious identity. The last dimension plays the ultimate role here: it seems that the translator (or the publisher) are so concerned they might be accused of blasphemy against a figure as revered as the Prophet Muhammad that they tend to ignore the fact that the blasphemy is uttered by a fictional character, which does not necessarily imply the author either endorses or approves of these words; likewise, they ignore the fact that the Muslim readership receive it in translation or in inverted commas, as it were. Regardless of all this, content damaging to the reputation of Muhammad or Islam is either deleted or ameliorated in the translations discussed in the study.

Operations of this kind demonstrate that the receiving culture feels powerful, independent, and confident enough to shape the representation of the values they uphold, in translation. Manipulative interferences into texts under translation might be explained in the following manner: Arabs and Muslims, as they realise they appeared as the Other to Europeans, be it as a dissenter, pagan, or barbarian, want to use their own voice in translations into Arabic, to represent themselves in a way that adheres to their own system of values, and to extricate from an ill-fitting costume crafted by Europeans. Thus, translation serves as an arena for squaring historical accounts, including accusations of heresy, Crusades, and colonialism. The criterion of faithfulness recedes into the background in a struggle for reclaiming one's own world view and self-image according to one's own cultural script.[12] However, it

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[11] As regards works created outside of Europe, Einboden (2013: 45–72) points out that similar manipulations were applied in *Ḥayāt Muḥammad*, the Arabic translation of Washington Irving's *Life of Mahomet* (1850). Its author, ʿAlī Ḥusnī al-Kharbūṭlī, interfered with the text so greatly that he changed the import of the entire work: many passages ambivalent about the Prophet in the original turned out to paint his favourable picture in translation. I would like to acknowledge Jacqueline Jondot, from the University of Toulouse, for sharing information on the Arabic rendition of the book.

[12] The concept was used by Lefevere (1992: 87–98), who described manipulations caused by incompatible cultural scripts in the translations of Homer into French and English; cf. Amin-Zaki (1995: 223–234) on the way oaths and obscenities in Shakepeare's plays were translated into Arabic; and Michalski (2007: 174–179 and 180–182) on adjusting the content of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* to the Muslim cultural script.

is legitimate to explore the efficacy of a strategy where one represses the memory of the blows one has sustained.

Looking from a different perspective, one might say that "correcting" a text through axiological domestication opens a gateway for some of the works of world literature to enter the Arab and Muslim world, which otherwise would be hampered by conservative patronage. Thus, the modifications which texts undergo in translation may be treated as inevitable concessions: they are unfaithful in detail to promote the work in general. Another possible interpretation of these interferences is that translators have corrected the inadvertent factual errors of the authors. In the translators' eyes, these modifications were not intended to "bend" reality; instead, they were a well-meaning way of setting the authors' errors right. Deriving from a particular environment, the authors had insufficient knowledge on the reality they strove to describe. To put it bluntly, Dante made a terrible error by placing Muhammad in Hell. Cervantes' expertise in Arab culture could not be on a par with that of Arabs themselves. Scott's knowledge about Islam was rather patchy, which is why his protagonists speak hurtfully of Islam. The task of the translator, in this particular context, may have been to correct or at least signal these errors.

Translated from Polish by Bartosz Sowiński

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