

**The historical eras during which the Arabic language and its modes of written expression were deeply affected by contact with other cultures and the processes of translation.**

### **1. Damascus 8<sup>th</sup> century**

The movement to Damascus began after Muslim community began to expand to other regions in the area.

- Bringing the Arabic language into contact with other cultures.

Muslim army rapid conquests brought Arabic into contact with the Persian and Byzantine empire and other cultures in an entirely and different context.

Arabic → the language of the Quran and prayer was playing an increasing role in the public life of the newly conquered territories.

**The local language of the area included:** Persian, Coptic, and Byzantine Greek.

- Such language difference had led caliph *Khalifa* Abdul Malik to make the Arabic the official language.
  - He required that all translations conducted in Arabic.
    - The need of other arose.
      - It resulted in the development of the chancery.
      - The rise of prominent communication specialists.
- **Prominent figures of the 8<sup>th</sup> century:**
  - Abdu Hamid
    - Known as “alkatib”
    - Wrote literature on how to be a qualified bureaucrat.
  - Ibn Almunajjim
    - Numerous translations of middle Persian history. (his acquired mastery of the Middle Persian language gave him access to the cultural treasures of the ancient Indo-Persian tradition)
    - Known for his translation of Kalilah and Dimnah
    - Wrote the great book of etiquette.

### **2. Baghdad 9<sup>th</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The raising community of scholars had resulted in the establishment of the *Adab* field.

- After a power struggle, the new caliphate court was moved from Damascus to Baghdad.
- Baghdad had a purpose → which was being a multicultural home for all scholars and academics.

- Thanks to Abdul Hamid and Ibn Almuqaffa, much of the groundwork was already made for Baghdad.

### **Translation efforts in Baghdad:**

- Baghdad was very elemental in driving the movement of translating.
- Texts that in fields included astronomy, alchemy, and mathematics.
  - Which were originally made in Greek, Persian, and Indian.
- Many translators have found home in Baghdad due to the abundance of work available:
  - Refinement of existing translations.
  - Teaching younger generations how to translate.
- The translation movement lost a notable amount of drive at the end of the 10<sup>th</sup> century.
  - Most development and scientific discoveries ensued after.
- A new phase had started in which Arab Muslim scholars would use the translated repertoire as a starting point and take the various sciences involved to new heights:
  - Ibn Sina (medicine)
  - Al-Biruni (astronomy)
  - Al-Khawarizmi (mathematics)
  - Al-Farabi (philosophy)

### **3. Al-Andalus 10<sup>th</sup>-13<sup>th</sup> centuries**

The culture created by the new Muslim society was from the outset multi-racial, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual.

Closer to the 13<sup>th</sup> century, translation in Al-Andalus was at its peak.

- Due to the new Islamic influence and the translation movement of the cultural Latin text and improving them.

Latin was gradually transformed from the prestige language of the pre-710 source culture into the target language.

Such actions have given the Arabic language a major status in communication.

Used by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

What helped even more is that all the different communities of Muslims, Jews, and Christians at the time were living peacefully without conflict, as translation efforts have development.

- Such way of life had made Cordoba one of the best places for any academia and scholars.

The French Benedictine pursued his declared interest in Islam by having the text of the Quran translated into Latin

Latin language was the Prestige language and became the Target Language.

### **Al-Andalus Toledo:**

- The translation movement in Toledo had produces a wealth of text that has been translated from Arabic and Hebrew into Latin.

- The movement itself and the translators have helped maintaining the wealth of Arabic text that were translated from Greek.
- Their actions have helped the worlds further improve and develop the science that is known today.

#### 4. Beirut and Cairo 19<sup>th</sup> century

This era was termed the “modern” period

One translation event during this “premodern” era was the arrival in Europe of the already mentioned Arabic version of the Indo-Persian tale collection known as *Alf Layla wa-layla*.

Napoleon’s invasion in 1798, whose major aim was to thwart British colonial involvement in India

- Napoleon brought with him not only translators to convert his speeches and proclamations into Arabic, but also a large team of scientists who recorded details of life in the country in the famous *Description de l’Egypte* and engaged in debates with Egyptian intellectuals of the time.

Egypt needed an army like France, so they send the young Egyptians on missions to Europe to learn the languages and, above all, to study weaponry and military tactics.

These Egyptians also managed to translate many other French literature.

Rifaa Al-Tahtawi returned to Egypt with an excellent command of French and was appointed director of new translation school (*madrasat al-alsun*)

As for Beirut, such effort is found in translations of the bible and the press allowed for more European literature to be translated.

A newspaper begun in 1858 that immediately started serializing translations of French fiction.