

American Association of Teachers of Arabic
الرابطة الأمريكية لأساتذة العربية
Arabic Translation Contest

Two First-place Awards, each **\$600**
Two Second-place Awards, each **\$400**

Deadline for submission of entries: 15 August 2020
Prizes to be awarded: 10 October 2020

The need for capable translators to produce accurate, fluent, even – when appropriate – artistic English renditions of Arabic literary and nonliterary texts is widely acknowledged. Addressing this need, the American Association of Teachers of Arabic has sought an effective, concrete means to encourage and recognize superior ability in the written translation of Arabic into English. To this end AATA will award four annual prizes for outstanding achievement by a student of Arabic in translating into English a significant work or portion of a work composed in Arabic.

Two awards, a first prize of \$600 and a second prize of \$400 may be offered pending decision of the judges in each of the two categories. Honorable Mentions will be awarded to deserving but not prize-worthy entries.

I. CATEGORIES

- a. Literary Arabic: such as poetry; oratory; belles lettres and adab-works; prose fiction (including maqamaat); drama; folklore; etc.
- b. Nonliterary Arabic: such as history; biography and autobiography; religious, theological, sectarian, religious-legal, and related works; political or governmental writings; scientific and technical studies; philosophy; philology, grammar, and linguistics; literary criticism; etc.

Obviously, the foregoing enumeration of genres neither purports to be exhaustive nor precludes the submission of entries in genres other than those mentioned. In addition, since the history of Arabic letters yielded certain genres and works (or portions of works) that are not easy to classify as “literary” or “nonliterary” the entrant will determine and specify under which category (A or B) his/her entry is to be judged and, in the “Introductory Essay” (see below), will explain and justify that determination if necessary.

Applicants are discouraged from submitting translations of texts that have already been translated into English or any other major language. If, however, the candidate submits a text which has been previously translated, s/he must explain convincingly the need for a new translation and provide a copy of the appropriate portion of the earlier translation.

- II. ELIGIBLE CONTESTANTS** are students who are currently participating in a program of Arabic instruction in country and or abroad at any level, or who have been so

participating at some time during the two years prior to the current academic year. Entries must be accompanied by a note attesting to the student's participation signed by his/her instructor or another responsible person within the program.

III. TERMS OF THE AWARD

- a. Attestation of eligibility (see above).
- b. Short résumé --especially of training in Arabic.
- c. Introductory essay: In this essay (which should be relatively short, though no limitation of length is prescribed), the entrant should:
 - i. Discuss the work or passage selected for translation, its author (if known), and its genre (justifying his/her categorization of it, if necessary; as described above)
 - ii. Explain the significance of translating the selected text into English; if the selection has been translated into one or more Western languages, the entrant should indicate why his/her translation is desirable.
 - iii. Describe the selected text itself—sketching very briefly its language and style, giving precise details as to the original source (full publication data or manuscript or archival provenance, if appropriate), and specifying variant versions, if such are encountered. ***The importance of this essay cannot be overemphasized.*** In it, the entrant must establish the challenging nature of the work being translated and justify the choice of the selection. The judges attach considerable weight to the arguments set forth in this essay.

To preserve the anonymity of the contest, no identifying information, such as the entrant's name and university program, should be mentioned in the essay.

- d. A copy of the selected text or, if a copy is impossible to obtain or make, precise bibliographic information (the copy can be returned to the entrant if he/she so desires).
- e. Translation. The translation should be, above all, accurate, fluent, and idiomatic.
 - i. Length. There is no prescription as to length. A length of 10-15 double-spaced, typewritten pages of translation is suggested only as an average. But individual entrants should feel free to submit longer or shorter translations as the difficulty, complexity, continuity, or other circumstances of their selected text might dictate. If the entrant deems it desirable to comment on the length of the selected text, he/she may do so in the Introductory Essay.
 - ii. Style. Clarity and aptness of style are essential. ***The opinion of the judges as to correctness and style of the English translation shall be final.*** Where the subject matter and vocabulary of the Arabic original are of a technical, professional, or disciplinary nature, they may require a corresponding style and terminology in English. Concern to reproduce stylistic elements of the original will be considered favorably as long as no serious damage is done either to the Arabic meaning or to the English grammar and usage.

- iii. Format. The format of the translation is to be determined by the entrant's own preferences and the formal and generic demands of the selected text, with these stipulations:
 - 1. Pagination: the page numbers (and/or paragraphs and/or line numbers) of the original are to be indicated at appropriate points on the translation;
 - 2. Transliteration: a recognized system of transliterating Arabic names and terms should be mentioned and used consistently in the body of the translation and the Notes;
 - 3. Cruxes: dubious, ambiguous, alternative, or literal renderings should be included in the Notes (see following section).
- f. Notes. The entrant should provide in a separate section whatever notes s/he regards as necessary, dealing, for instance, with the following points:
 - i. Cruxes of translation (see above);
 - ii. Translation of variant readings (where such occur);
 - iii. Explanation or justification of possibly disputable renderings (at the entrant's own discretion);
 - iv. Biographical, historical, cultural, philological, linguistic, or other relevant information, deemed useful to a proper understanding of the translation. The number, extent, and scope of the Notes provided are left entirely to the entrant's judgement.

IV. AWARDS

Winning entries will be announced at the Business Meeting of AATA on 10 October 2020, Washington, DC, when awards will be presented (a winning entrant need not be present to receive his/her award).

V. JUDGING

A committee of judges will be appointed by the Translation Committee of AATA. This committee, in particular cases, will solicit additional evaluations of translations from individuals specifically qualified in the areas in question, and these evaluations will be given full consideration by the committee in its final decision.

VI. DEADLINE

All entries must e-mailed or submitted no later than **15 August 2020** to be eligible for consideration.

VII. ADDRESS

Please send all entries to: **aatacontest2020@gmail.com**