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Press Release

## The finalist translators from Arabic of the Biennial Mario Lattes Translation Prize have been announced

**Maria Avino (Khaled Khalifa), Samuela Pagani (Hoda Barakat), Nadia Rocchetti (Emily Nasrallah), Monica Ruocco (Ali Bader), Barbara Teresi (Mohamed Hasan Alwan)**

**The prize-giving ceremony where the final winner of the first edition will be proclaimed, plus a lectio magistralis by orientalist Fabrizio Pennacchietti will be held on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July at Castello di Perno in World Heritage Site Langhe**

*www.fondazionebottarilattes.it*

«Literary translators are really putting themselves out there to translate what's untranslatable». Italo Calvino

The first edition of the **Biennial Mario Lattes Translation Prize** focuses on the **Arabic language**. The prize is promoted by Fondazione Bottari Lattes, in collaboration with Associazione culturale Castello di Perno. The five **finalists** that the fixed Jury of the Prize selected, are the following: **Maria Avino**, translator of *Morire è un mestiere difficile* [Death is hard work] by Syrian writer **Khaled Khalifa** (- Bompiani, 2019); **Samuela Pagani**, translator of *Corriere di notte* [The night mail] by Lebanese writer **Hoda Barakat** (La nave di Teseo, 2019); **Nadia Rocchetti**, translator of *Viaggio contro il tempo* [Flight against time] by Lebanese writer **Emily Nasrallah** (Jouvence, 2018); **Monica Ruocco**, translator of *Il suonatore di nuvole* [Playing with the clouds] by Iraqi writer **Ali Bader** (Argo, 2017); **Barbara Teresi**, translator of *Una piccola morte* [Little death] by Saudi Arabian writer **Mohamed Hasan Alwan** (E/o, 2019).

The **prize-giving ceremony** will take place on **Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2020 at 6 pm** at the **Castello di Perno** (in the province of Cuneo) garden, in the heart of Langhe, World Heritage Site. Orientalist **Fabrizio Pennacchietti** will give a **lectio magistralis** whose title is *Can modern literary Arabic be called a "European" language?*, during the event. The ceremony where the winner will be proclaimed is hosted by journalist and essayist **Paola Caridi**, a Middle East and Northern Africa scholar, and features the Prize jury members: **Anna Battaglia, Melita Cataldi, Mario Marchetti, Fabrizio Pennacchietti** himself, **Antonietta Pastore** (fixed Jury members) and **Isabella Camera d'Afflitto, Manuela E.B. Giolfo, Claudia Maria Tresso** (Experts' Jury members).

The prize-giving ceremony is **free admission, booking required**, subject to availability, and will take place in full compliance with Covid-9 public health emergency preparedness protocol (please send an email with your name and surname to: [book@fondazionebottarilattes.com](mailto:book@fondazionebottarilattes.com)). The event will be broadcast live on Fondazione Bottari Lattes's Facebook page. In the event of rain, the prize-giving ceremony will take place at the Fondazione Bottari Lattes auditorium (Monforte d'Alba, via Marconi 16).

Fondazione Bottari Lattes, with Mario Lattes Translation Prize, draws attention on the major role played by **translators** in spreading literature and the incomparable contribution of **translation** in making different populations and cultures meet, by breaking through ideological barriers, building new cultural bridges and fostering dialogue. With this initiative, Fondazione Bottari Lattes aims to promote the understanding of **cultures and writers that are less familiar with the Italian audience** and **encourage further translations to Italian** of their most relevant literary work in terms of contents, reflections, testimonies. In the full knowledge that translation is not just the mere transposition of a text from a source language to a target one. It is a discipline that can make different cultures, with which translators share a strong bond, exchange ideas and concepts.

### The five finalists

**Maria Avino**, translator of *Morire è un mestiere difficile* [Death is hard work] by **Khaled Khalifa** (Bompiani, 2019), was selected by the Jury because «the translated text is very fluent and poses no obstacles to the reader, we could rather call it a *page-turner*. A specific care regarding the cultural context is surely present. Yet, there was no need for translator's notes either regarding these cultural issues or the few non-translated Arabic terms – since everything can be easily gathered from the text».

**Samuela Pagani**, translator of *Corriere di notte* [The night mail] by **Hoda Barakat** (La nave di Teseo, 2019), is amongst the finalists because «her translation, surely standing out for some innovative linguistic choices, flows smoothly, with such a clear and lively language that readers can immediately immerse in the peculiar atmosphere of this work. The Italian version is truly absorbing to read and maintain the stylistic balance of the original one.»

**Nadia Rocchetti**, translator of *Viaggio contro il tempo* [Flight against time] by **Emily Nasrallah** (Jouvence, 2018), was selected because her work «proved to be well-balanced and read fluidly, with successfully conveyed characters, very few obstacles and rare ambiguities. Stereotyped or regionally charged expressions are almost absent. The text is engaging».

**Monica Ruocco**, translator of *Il suonatore di nuvole* [Playing with the clouds] by **Ali Bader** (Argo, 2017), is one of the finalists thanks to her translation that is «a pleasure to read, lively, fresh, with plausible word choices, coherent with the topic and the background; its major achievement is the way it manages to convey the underlying irony of the specific existence that the novel tells about».

**Barbara Teresi**, translator of *Una piccola morte* [Little death] by Saudi Arabian writer **Mohamed Hasan Alwan** (*Una piccola morte* E/o, 2019), is among the finalists because «the translation flows in harmony, leading us through a wide range of registers, ages, human and political landscapes and due to a generally refined prose, bringing back long gone language expressions.»

### The Juries: the fixed + the experts' ones

The **fixed Jury** of the Prize pinpointed the **five finalist translation works** by assessing the quality of translations of **contemporary fiction novels in Arabic, published in Italy between 2017 and**

**2019**, with a focus on the translator's ability to convey the style, the jargons, the cultural issues of the original into Italian.

The **fixed Jury** consists of the following translators and teachers: **Anna Battaglia** (she would give lectures of French language at the University of Turin and translated *Oiseaux* by Saint-John Perse, among others), **Melita Cataldi** (a former professor of English-Irish literature at the University of Turin, who translated texts from Old Irish, W.B. Yeats and 20<sup>th</sup> century poets such as Hutchinson and Heaney), **Mario Marchetti** (a long-time translator from French and English for Einaudi and Bollati-Boringhieri Publishers, president of the Italo Calvino Prize, author of essays and reviews), **Antonietta Pastore** (a writer and a translator from Japanese, she translated much of Haruki Murakami's work as well as Soseki Natsume, Kobo Abe, Yasushi Inoue) and **Fabrizio Pennacchietti** (an orientalist, former professor of Semitic philology at the Ca' Foscari University of Venice and the University of Turin, is a member of the Turin Academy of Sciences).

The fixed Jury is joined, for each edition, by an **Experts' Jury** for the specific language of the prize, that will assess the five finalists and proclaim the winner. For this first edition, the **jury members for the Arabic language**, are: **Isabella Camera d'Afflitto** (full professor of modern and contemporary Arabic language at La Sapienza University in Rome and L'Orientale University in Naples), **Manuela E.B. Giolfo** (associate professor of Arabic language and literature and teaching literary translation of Arabic fiction at the Master's Degree course of Specialist Translation and Conference Interpreter at the Interpretation and Translation Faculty of the IULM University in Milan), **Claudia Maria Tresso** (associate professor of Arabic language and literature at the Master's Degree course in Translation of the Language Department of the University of Turin).

The **winner** will be awarded a 3,000 Euros prize. All the **finalists** will receive a 500 Euros prize.

### **The supporters**

**Biennial Mario Lattes Translation Prize** is dedicated to a publisher, painter and writer who engaged with worldwide famous intellectuals. It is organized by **Fondazione Bottari Lattes** in collaboration with **Associazione culturale Castello di Perno** and **Monforte d'Alba Municipality**, thanks to **Fondazione CRC** and **Banca d'Alba**, sponsored by **Mibact**, **Unione di Comuni "Colline Di Langa e Del Barolo"** and **S. Lattes & C. Editori**.

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