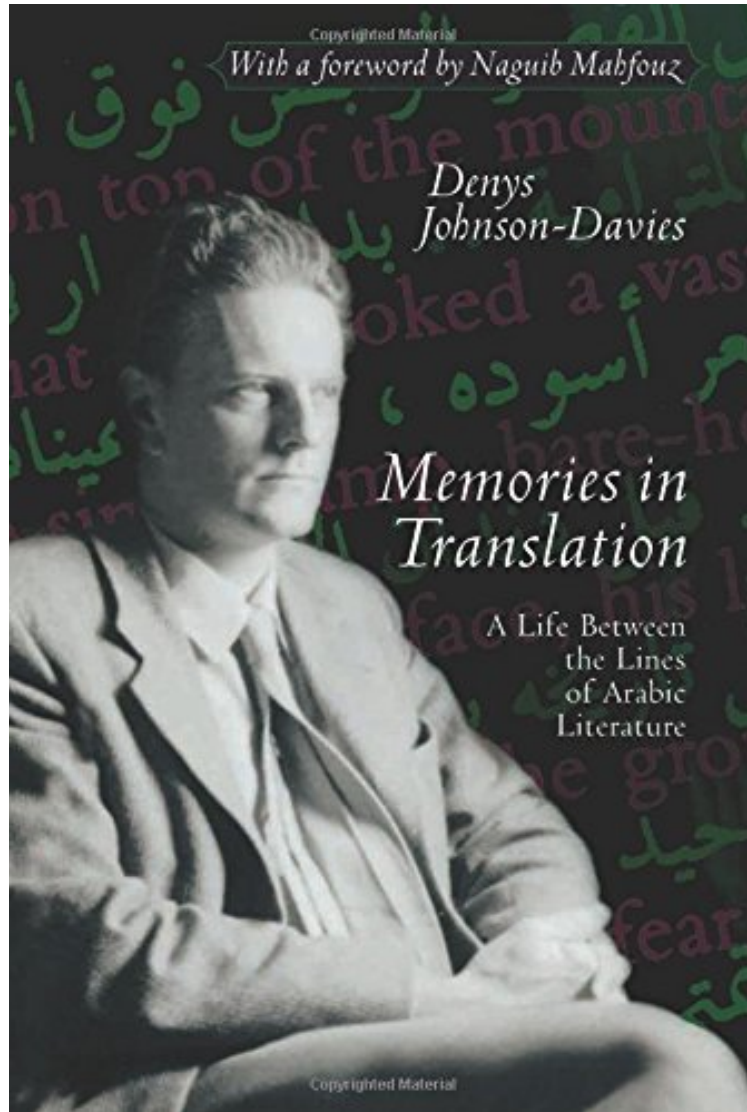


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## Memories In Translation

*Denys Johnson-Davies*

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**Denys Johnson-Davies : Memories In Translation** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Memories In Translation:

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Fascinating ReadBy MaryMR This is a very interesting recounting of one man's journey through life as an Arabic to English translator during a very interesting time in history. The text is peppered throughout with the names of well known Arabic authors of the 20th Century and in the course of reading I learned about authors and works that I was previously unaware of which will lead to some great reading. There are many photos, taken by the author's wife, of the author with some of the great Arabic language writers mentioned in the

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Having lived an important part of my life in Morocco just like the author and having recently entered the world of translation from Arabic to my native language for the sheer love of literature with no hopes for substantial earnings to be gained from this endeavour I found the book full of useful information. Great abbreviated chapters on some prominent Arab writers with so many interesting details. Definitely a joy to read for whoever is attracted by this so prolific but yet so underestimated literature. I definitely believe that in this era of quick-to-read books Arab writers could make a paramount contribution for the reestablishment of high literary standards still offering interesting plots.

Nobody has done more for modern Arabic literature in translation than Denys Johnson-Davies, described by the late Edward Said as "the leading Arabic English translator of our time." With more than twenty-five volumes of translated Arabic novels, short stories, plays, and poetry to his name, and a career spanning some sixty years, he has brought the works of a host of writers from across the Arab world to an ever-widening English readership. Here he tells the story of a life in translation, and gives intimate glimpses of many of the Arab writers who are becoming increasingly known in the west. In the 1940s, while teaching at Cairo University, he came to know such iconic figures as Yahya Hakki, Tewfik al-Hakim, Yusuf Idris, and of course Naguib Mahfouz. Later when he lived in Beirut, that other great literary center of the Arab world, he spent time with such poets as Tawfic Sayigh, Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, and Boland al-Haydari. He was already a close friend of Jabra Ibrahim Jabra from his college days at Cambridge, and later of another well-known Palestinian writer, Ghassan Kanafani. In the 1960s he started an influential Arabic literary magazine, *Aswat*, which published the leading avant-garde writers of the time, and in 1967 he put together the first representative volume of short stories from the Arab world. Then he really put Arabic writing on the international literary map with the establishment of the Heinemann Arab Authors series. Since then he has continued to select and translate the best of Arabic fiction, most recently the classic novella by Yahya Hakki, *The Lamp of Umm Hashim* (AUC Press 2004). He has also translated three books of Islamic Hadith (with Ezzeddin Ibrahim) and other books of Islamic thought, and has written a large number of children's books of Middle Eastern history and folktales.

About the Author  
DENYS JOHNSON-DAVIES has produced more than thirty volumes of translation of modern Arabic literature, including *The Essential Tawfiq al-Hakim* (AUC Press, 2008) and *The Essential Yusuf Idris* (AUC Press, 2009). He received the Sheikh Zayed Book Award in 2007 for Personality of the Year in the Field of Culture.