



# THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS TRANSLATION PRIZES

THURSDAY 1 MARCH 2018  
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# THE SOCIETY OF AUTHORS TRANSLATION PRIZES

## PROGRAMME

Introduced by Paula Johnson  
The Society of Authors

Presentation of the Prizes

Reception in the foyer

**The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize**  
for translation from the Arabic

**The Goethe-Institut Award for New Translation**  
for translation from the German

**The Schlegel-Tieck Prize**  
for translation from the German

**The Scott Moncrieff Prize**  
for translation from the French

**The Premio Valle Inclán**  
for translation from the Spanish

**The Vondel Prize**  
for translation from the Dutch

**The TA First Translation Prize**  
for debut translation

# THE SAIF GHOBASH BANIPAL PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE ARABIC

## Winner:

**Robin Moger** for  
his translation of  
*The Book of Safety*  
by Yasser Abdel Hafez  
(Hoopoe Fiction,  
AUC Press)

*'An alluring translation  
by Egyptian author and  
journalist Yasser Abdel Hafez  
that captures beautifully  
the moods, paces, rhythms  
and nuances of the Arabic  
original and, ruthlessly but  
lovingly, lures us into the  
conflicting, conspiratorial,  
and violent world that it  
draws.'*

*The Banipal Judges*

## Sponsors:

Omar Saif Ghobash, who  
with his family sponsors the  
Prize in memory of his late  
father, is from the United  
Arab Emirates. Saif Ghobash  
was a man passionate about  
Arabic literature as well as  
international works.

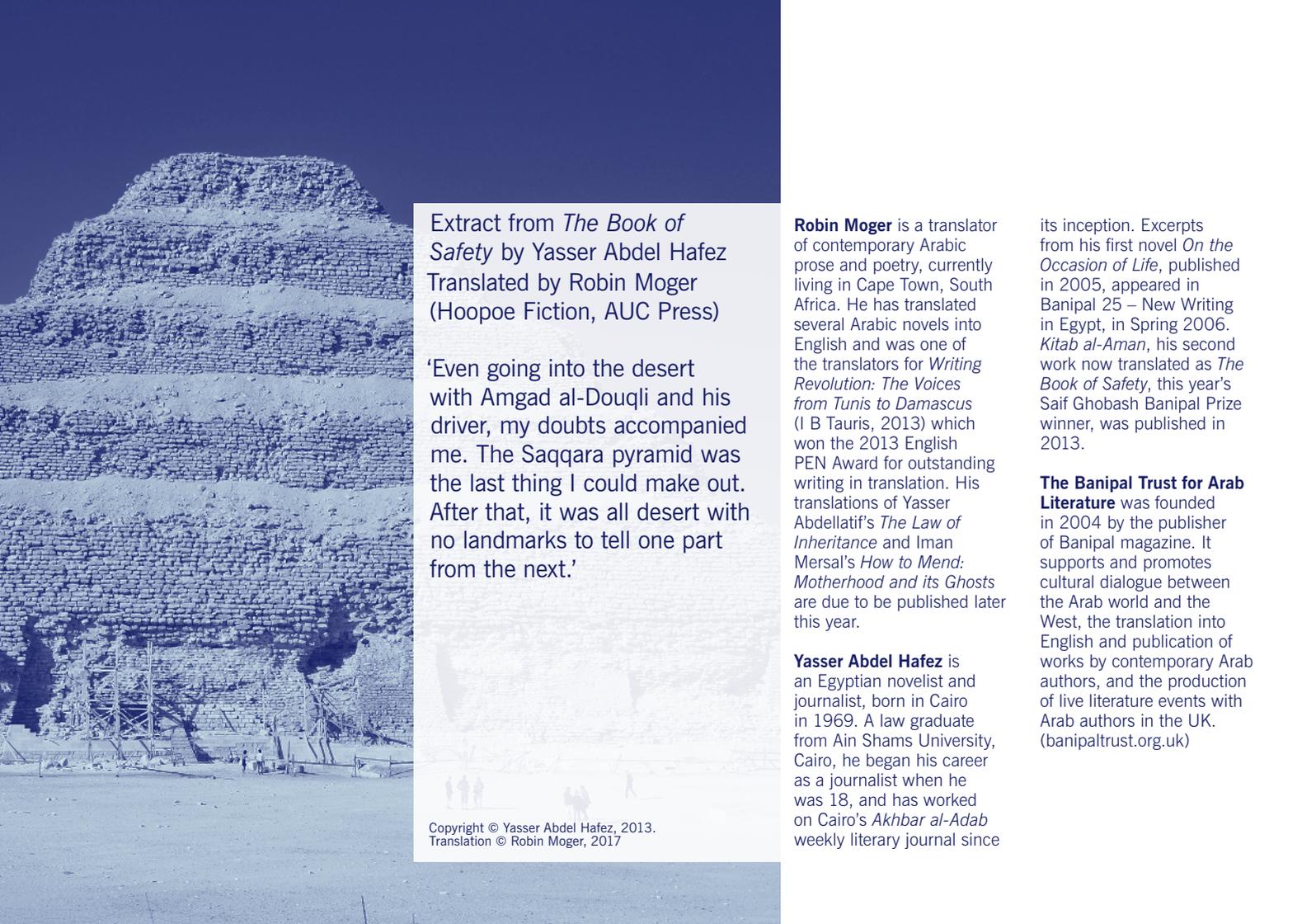
The Banipal Trust  
for Arab Literature

## Judges:

Pete Kalu  
Alastair Niven LVO OBE  
Professor Wen-chin Ouyang  
Salam Sarhan

The £3,000 Saif Ghobash  
Banipal Prize, first awarded in  
2006, is presented annually.  
The prize was established  
by *Banipal*, the magazine of  
modern Arab literature, and the  
Banipal Trust for Arab Literature.





Extract from *The Book of Safety* by Yasser Abdel Hafez  
Translated by Robin Moger  
(Hoopoe Fiction, AUC Press)

‘Even going into the desert with Amgad al-Douqli and his driver, my doubts accompanied me. The Saqqara pyramid was the last thing I could make out. After that, it was all desert with no landmarks to tell one part from the next.’

Copyright © Yasser Abdel Hafez, 2013.  
Translation © Robin Moger, 2017

**Robin Moger** is a translator of contemporary Arabic prose and poetry, currently living in Cape Town, South Africa. He has translated several Arabic novels into English and was one of the translators for *Writing Revolution: The Voices from Tunis to Damascus* (I B Tauris, 2013) which won the 2013 English PEN Award for outstanding writing in translation. His translations of Yasser Abdellatif’s *The Law of Inheritance* and Iman Mersal’s *How to Mend: Motherhood and its Ghosts* are due to be published later this year.

**Yasser Abdel Hafez** is an Egyptian novelist and journalist, born in Cairo in 1969. A law graduate from Ain Shams University, Cairo, he began his career as a journalist when he was 18, and has worked on Cairo’s *Akhbar al-Adab* weekly literary journal since

its inception. Excerpts from his first novel *On the Occasion of Life*, published in 2005, appeared in Banipal 25 – New Writing in Egypt, in Spring 2006. *Kitab al-Aman*, his second work now translated as *The Book of Safety*, this year’s Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize winner, was published in 2013.

**The Banipal Trust for Arab Literature** was founded in 2004 by the publisher of Banipal magazine. It supports and promotes cultural dialogue between the Arab world and the West, the translation into English and publication of works by contemporary Arab authors, and the production of live literature events with Arab authors in the UK. ([banipaltrust.org.uk](http://banipaltrust.org.uk))

# THE GOETHE-INSTITUT AWARD FOR NEW TRANSLATION FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

## Winner:

**Mandy Wight** for  
her translation from  
*Unterleuten* by  
Juli Zeh (Luchterhand  
Literaturverlag)

*'Mandy Wight's submission epitomises the principle that a good translation reads as if it's not a translation – and it reads with arresting skill and fluency.'* OK

*'An accurate and dynamic rendering of a multi-layered and challenging text.'* AG

*'A very consistent voice, and stylistic coherence.'* EH

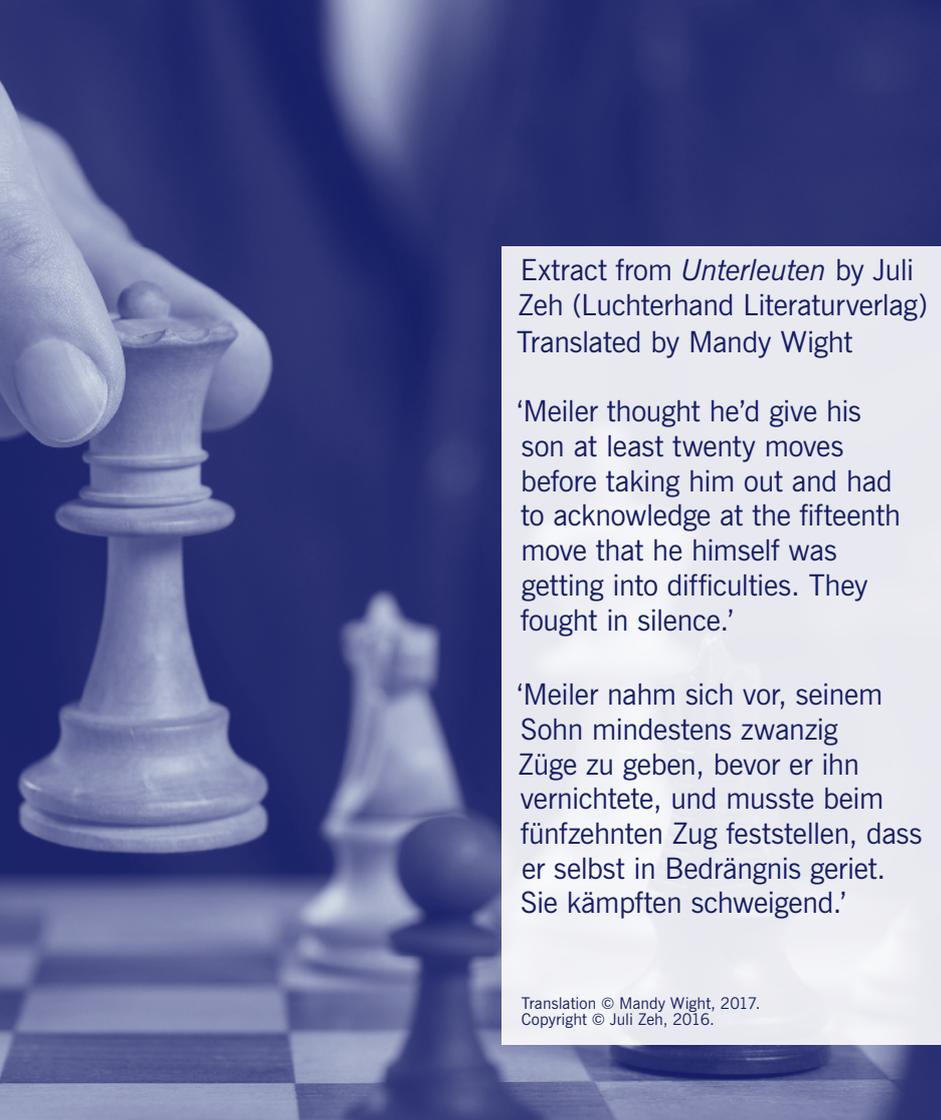
## Sponsor:

Goethe-Institut

## Judges:

Annemarie Goodridge  
Eva Hoffman  
Oliver Kamm

The Goethe-Institut Award, presented since 2010, is a biennial award of €1,000 for the best translation from a chosen text – this year from *Unterleuten* by Juli Zeh. The winner is invited to attend the Leipzig Book Fair, which includes a place at the International Translators' meeting.



Extract from *Unterleuten* by Juli Zeh (Luchterhand Literaturverlag)  
Translated by Mandy Wight

‘Meiler thought he’d give his son at least twenty moves before taking him out and had to acknowledge at the fifteenth move that he himself was getting into difficulties. They fought in silence.’

‘Meiler nahm sich vor, seinem Sohn mindestens zwanzig Züge zu geben, bevor er ihn vernichtete, und musste beim fünfzehnten Zug feststellen, dass er selbst in Bedrängnis geriet. Sie kämpften schweigend.’

Translation © Mandy Wight, 2017.  
Copyright © Juli Zeh, 2016.

**Mandy Wight** was born in Bangor, Wales and brought up in Reading and then York. After living and working as a solicitor in London for ten years, she moved back north to Sheffield in 1986 where she re-trained as a teacher and brought up her family. She now lives in the Hope Valley, Derbyshire. She came to translating through being a linguist and a reader in German and French mostly, as well as English, but had put translation on hold until she left her last teaching post in 2014. She subsequently attended seminars at the Literary Translation Centre at the London Book Fair, and the Translate in the City course, run by the City of London University. She has had translation published online with *No Man's Land* and in 2017 attended the Summer School at BCLT. She has written reader's reports for the magazine *New Books*

*in German* and her blog on books, including German books, is [peakreads.wordpress.com](http://peakreads.wordpress.com).

The **Goethe-Institut** is the cultural institute of the Federal Republic of Germany, promoting the study of German language globally and encouraging international cultural cooperation. It organises and supports arts programmes, fosters German literature in translation, delivers German language courses, and offers information and training services for teachers of German. The library of the Goethe-Institut London serves as a resource for those interested in contemporary Germany. ([goethe.de/uk](http://goethe.de/uk))

# THE SCHLEGEL-TIECK PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE GERMAN

## Winner:

**Allan Blunden**

for his translation of  
*Nightmare in Berlin* by  
Hans Fallada (Scribe)

*'Blunden captures, for his English-speaking audience, the unique character of Fallada's writing in which a gentle, ironic tone operates and functions at odds with the grim realities of his stories' settings.' JJ*

## Commended:

**Katy Derbyshire**

for her translation of  
*Bricks and Mortar*  
by Clemens Meyer  
(Fitzcarraldo Editions)

*'Meyer's ventriloquizing text represents a daunting task to the translator seeking to convey it to an Anglophone readership, and Derbyshire admirably meets the challenges it poses, conveying its energy in a very impressive way.' EJ*

## Sponsor:

Goethe-Institut

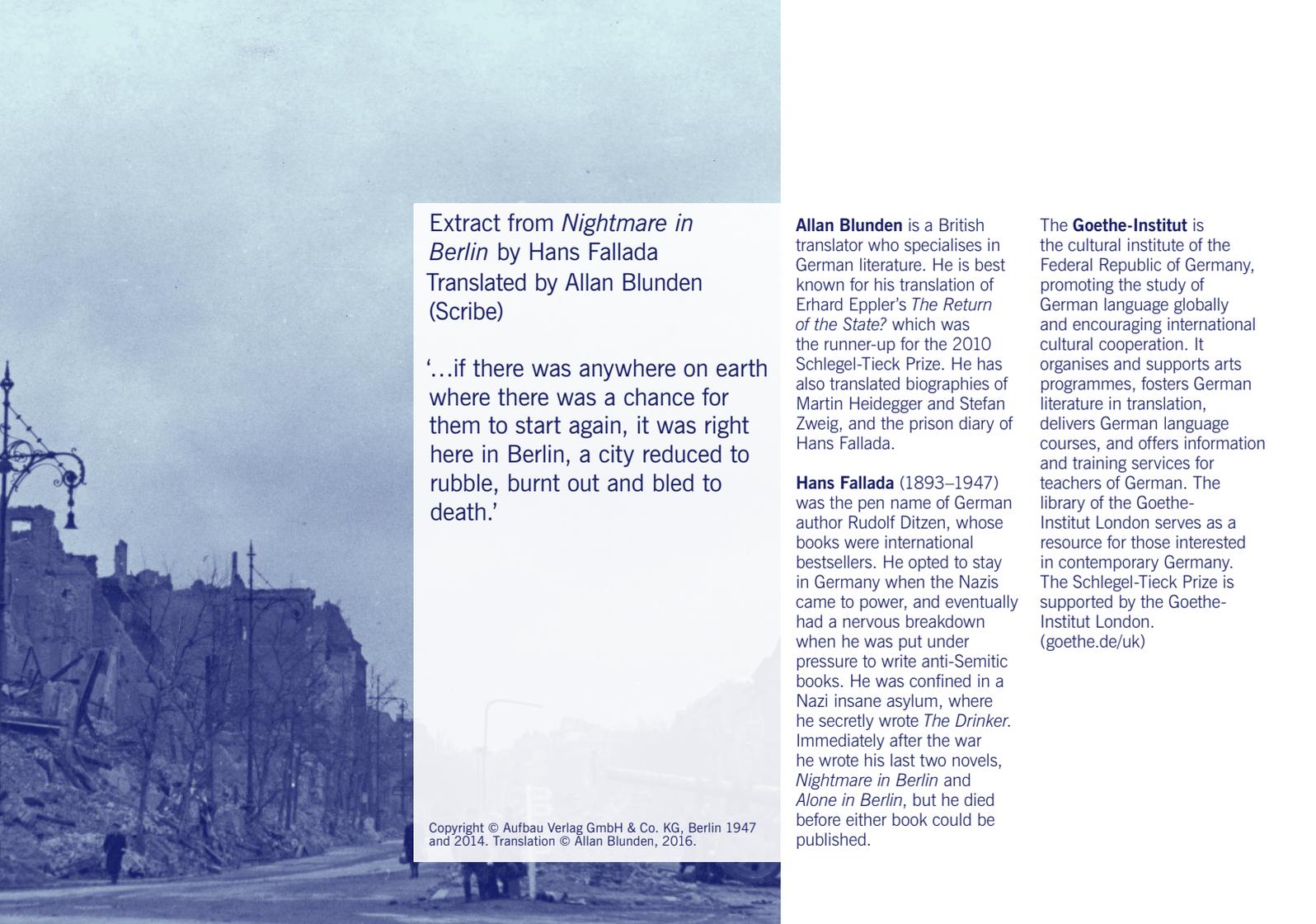
## Judges:

Dr. Emily Jeremiah  
Dr. James Jordan

The Schlegel-Tieck Prize (£3,000) has been awarded annually since 1965 and takes its name from two great poets of the Romantic period, August William Schlegel (1767-1845) and his friend Ludwig Tieck (1773-1853), also a noted translator.

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Extract from *Nightmare in Berlin* by Hans Fallada  
Translated by Allan Blunden  
(Scribe)

‘...if there was anywhere on earth where there was a chance for them to start again, it was right here in Berlin, a city reduced to rubble, burnt out and bled to death.’

Copyright © Aufbau Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Berlin 1947 and 2014. Translation © Allan Blunden, 2016.

**Allan Blunden** is a British translator who specialises in German literature. He is best known for his translation of Erhard Eppler's *The Return of the State?* which was the runner-up for the 2010 Schlegel-Tieck Prize. He has also translated biographies of Martin Heidegger and Stefan Zweig, and the prison diary of Hans Fallada.

**Hans Fallada** (1893–1947) was the pen name of German author Rudolf Ditzen, whose books were international bestsellers. He opted to stay in Germany when the Nazis came to power, and eventually had a nervous breakdown when he was put under pressure to write anti-Semitic books. He was confined in a Nazi insane asylum, where he secretly wrote *The Drinker*. Immediately after the war he wrote his last two novels, *Nightmare in Berlin* and *Alone in Berlin*, but he died before either book could be published.

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# THE SCOTT MONCRIEFF PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE FRENCH

## Winners:

**Will McMorran** and  
**Thomas Wynn** for their  
translation of *The 120  
Days of Sodom* by  
the Marquis de Sade  
(Penguin Classics)

*'The quality of Sade's mind  
is the reason that he is  
still worth reading in the  
21st century – if you have  
the stomach... without  
in any way giving in to  
hyperbole, this translation is  
a 21st century monument,  
changing not only the way  
in which we view the French  
18th century, but providing  
a guide to the present and  
the future.'* AH

## Commended:

**Antony Melville**  
for his translation  
of *Anicet or the  
Panorama* by Louis  
Aragon (Atlas Press)

*'This early novel by Aragon  
is a Dadaist tour de force,  
and its appearance at last in  
English, in this lively, elegant,  
funny, almost ventriloquial  
translation, is hugely  
welcome.'* IP

## Sponsors:

Institut français  
du Royaume-Uni  
ALCS

## Judges:

Professor Andrew Hussey  
Dr. Ian Patterson

The Scott-Moncrieff Prize of  
£1,000 has been awarded  
annually since 1965 and  
is named after C.K. Scott  
Moncrieff, the celebrated  
translator of Proust's  
*Remembrance of Things Past*.





Extract from *The 120 Days of Sodom* by the Marquis de Sade  
Translated by Will McMorran and  
Thomas Wynn (Penguin Classics)

'I never hesitate in my choices, and as I am always sure to find pleasure in those I make, remorse will never dull their appeal; steadfast in the principles I formed in my tender youth, I always act in accordance with them; they have revealed to me the emptiness and nullity of virtue; I loathe it.'

Translation © Will McMorran and Thomas Wynn, 2016.

**Dr Will McMorran** is a Senior Lecturer in French & Comparative Literature at Queen Mary University of London.

**Dr Thomas Wynn** is a Reader in French at Durham University.

The **Marquis de Sade** was born in Paris in 1740 and spent 32 years of his life in prison and insane asylums for a host of violent and sexual crimes. He wrote *The 120 Days of Sodom* while incarcerated in the Bastille. He was accepted by a new regime after the French Revolution, but by 1796 was a ruined man. He died in an insane asylum in 1814.

#### **Institut français du Royaume-Uni**

The French Book Office, a department of the Institut français in London, promotes French literature in the UK by informing publishers, translators and other potential

readers of new publications in French as well as translations into English and rights sales. It also supports translation from French into English via its Burgess Programme, and organises public events and festivals in connection with recent French publications and debates.

#### **The Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)**

is a not-for-profit membership organization for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers' work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity, ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents around 90,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £450 million to writers. ([alcs.co.uk](http://alcs.co.uk))

# THE PREMIO VALLE INCLÁN FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE SPANISH

**Winner:**  
**Margaret Jull Costa**  
for her translation of  
*On the Edge* by Rafael  
Chirbes (Harvill Secker)

*'Chirbes' kaleidoscopic, polyphonic narration, which moves from one century to another, from one character to another, in the same breath, is a mammoth challenge for a translator, but Margaret Jull Costa makes it seem effortless.' KB*

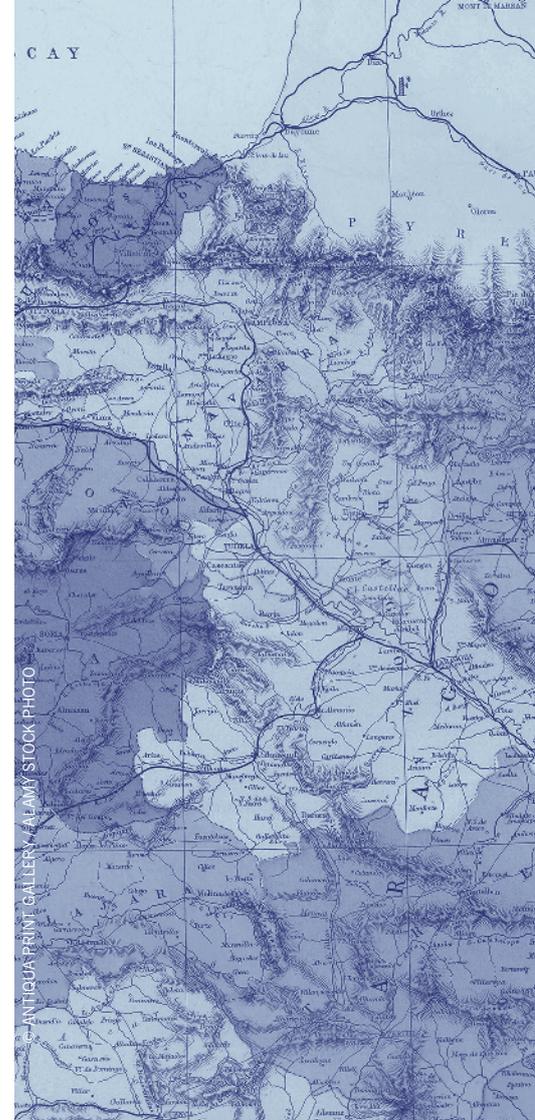
**Commended:**  
**Rosalind Harvey** for  
her translation of  
*I'll Sell You a Dog* by  
Juan Pablo Villalobos  
(And Other Stories)

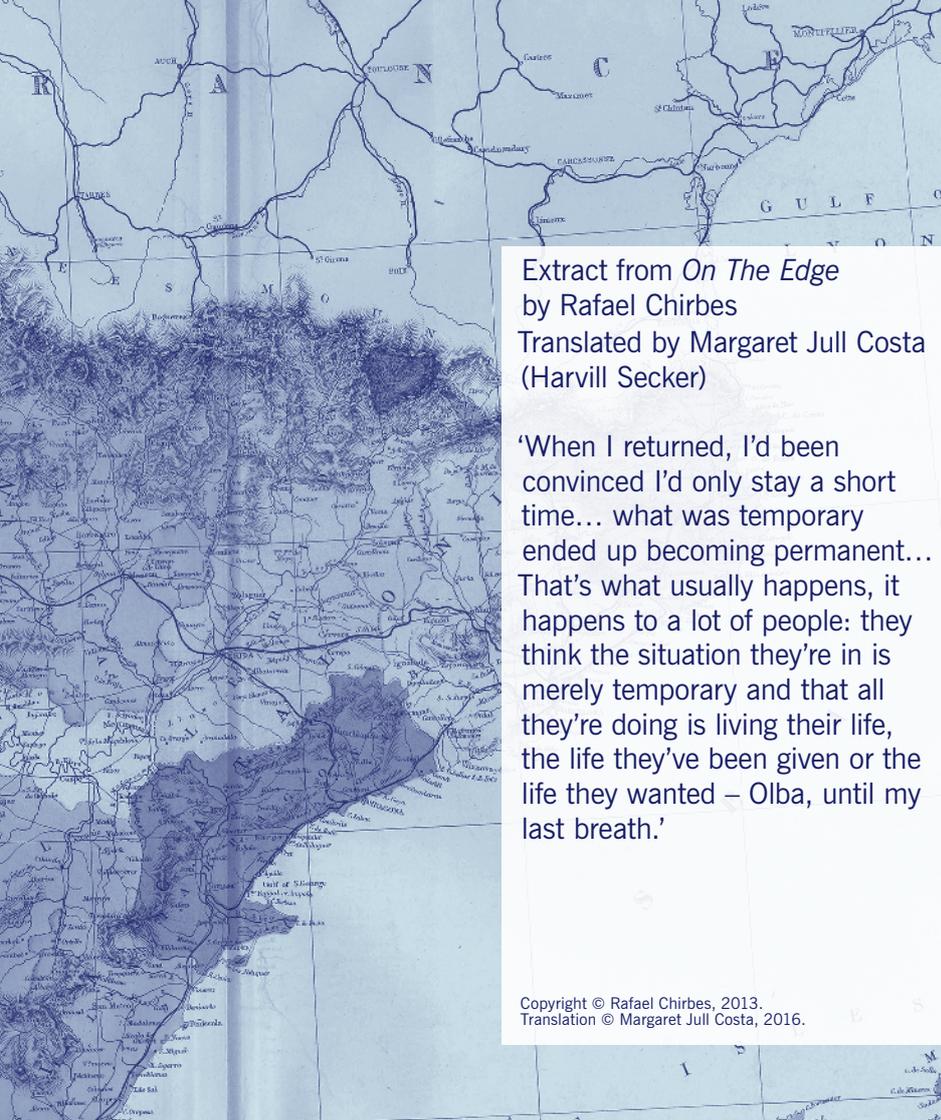
*'Rosalind Harvey's translation is pitch perfect in finding equivalences for both the situational comedy and also the many anarchic voices in the narrative. A splendid achievement.' JK*

**Sponsor:**  
ALCS

**Judges:**  
Dr. Katie Brown  
Professor John King

The Premio Valle Inclán of  
£2,000 was first awarded in  
1997 and is given annually.





Extract from *On The Edge*  
by Rafael Chirbes  
Translated by Margaret Jull Costa  
(Harvill Secker)

‘When I returned, I’d been convinced I’d only stay a short time... what was temporary ended up becoming permanent... That’s what usually happens, it happens to a lot of people: they think the situation they’re in is merely temporary and that all they’re doing is living their life, the life they’ve been given or the life they wanted – Olba, until my last breath.’

Copyright © Rafael Chirbes, 2013.  
Translation © Margaret Jull Costa, 2016.

**Margaret Jull Costa** has been a literary translator for over thirty years. She has been commended for the Premio Valle Inclán five times, and won the prize three times, twice for translations of novels by Javier Marías. She won the 2017 Best Translated Book Award for her co-translation with Robin Patterson of the Brazilian novelist Lúcio Cardoso’s *Chronicle of the Murdered House*. A Fellow of the Royal Society of Literature, she has been awarded an OBE for services to literature, and in 2015 she was given an Honorary Doctorate by the University of Leeds.

**Rafael Chirbes** (1949–2015) wrote nine novels and received the National Prize for Literature and the Critics Prize for *On the Edge*. ABC named him ‘the best writer of the twenty-first century in Spain’.

**The Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Society (ALCS)** is a not-for-profit membership organization for the benefit of all types of writers. Owned by its members, ALCS collects money due for secondary uses of writers’ work. It is designed to support authors and their creativity, ensure they receive fair payment and see their rights are respected. It promotes and teaches the principles of copyright and campaigns for a fair deal. It represents around 90,000 members, and since 1977 has paid over £450 million to writers. (alcs.co.uk)

# THE VONDEL PRIZE FOR TRANSLATION FROM THE DUTCH

## Winner:

**David McKay** for his translation of *War and Turpentine* by Stefan Hertmans (Harvill Secker)

*'David McKay's sensitive and meticulous translation of Stefan Hertmans' 'War and Turpentine', based on his grandfather's notebooks, has brought to life the atmosphere and speech of Belgium's lost generation with great precision.'* DG

## Commended:

**David Doherty** for his translations of *The Dutch Maiden* by Marente de Moor and *You Have Me To Love* by Jaap Robben (World Editions)

*'David Doherty has shown how versatile he is as a translator with two very different books: Jaap Robben's deeply disturbing coming-of-age novel and Marente de Moor's ice-cold period novel about a young woman fencer, set in pre-war Germany.'* DG

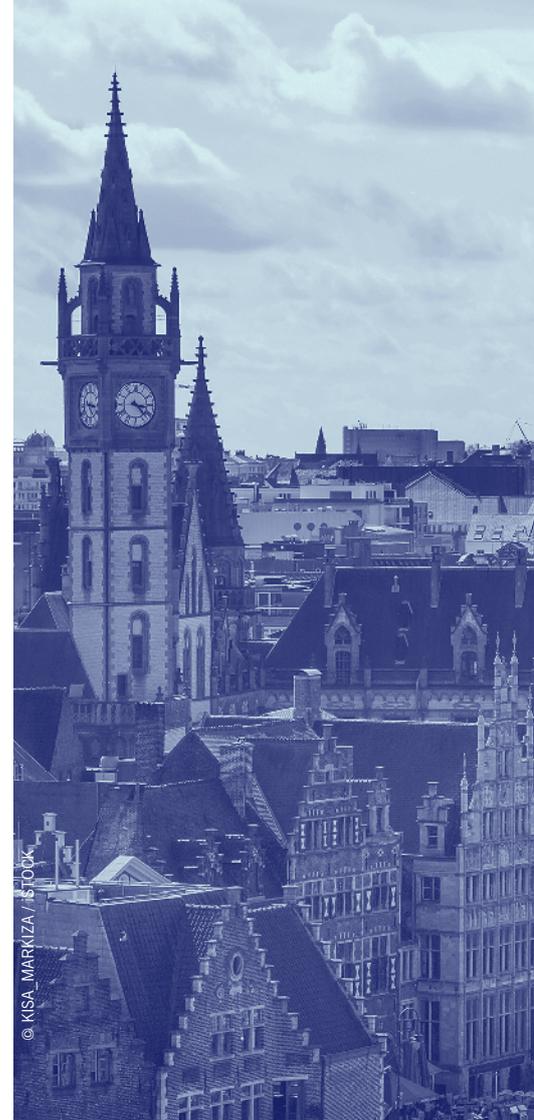
## Sponsors:

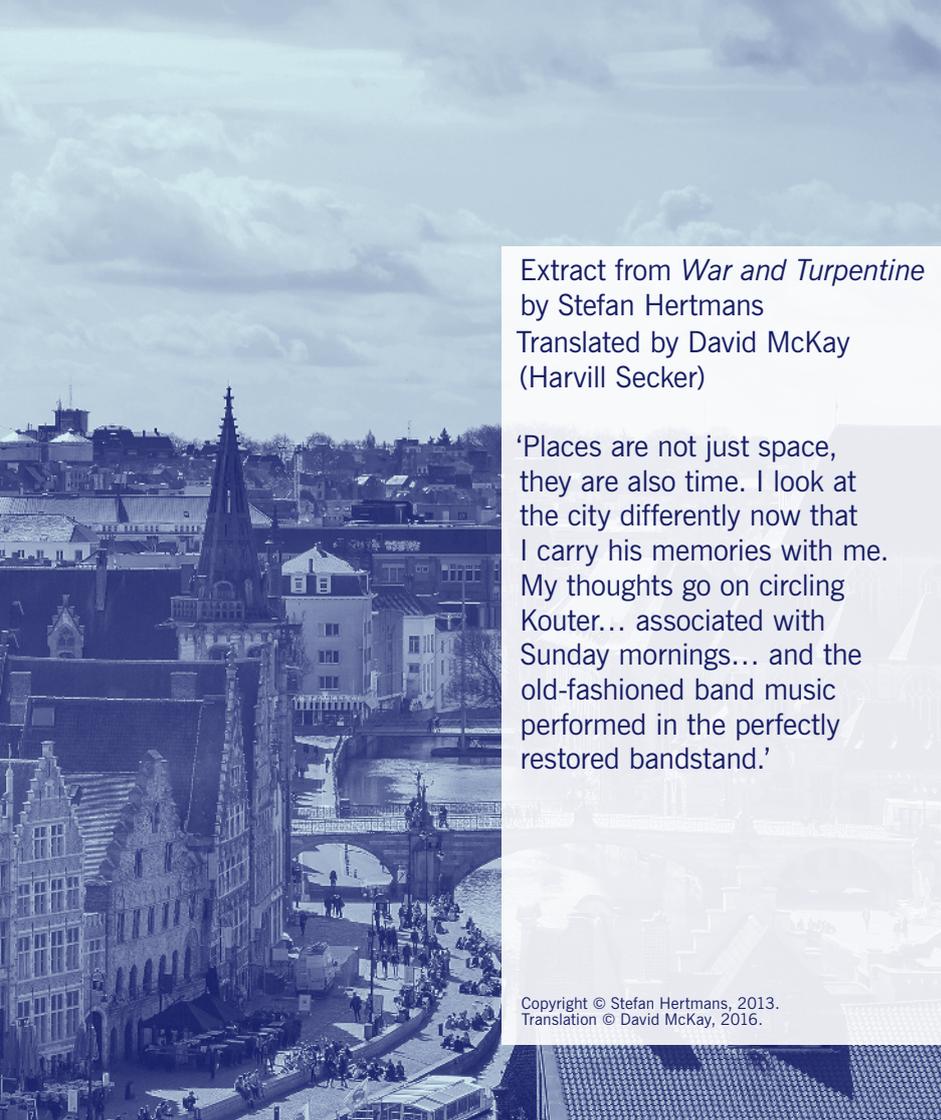
The Dutch Foundation for Literature  
Flanders Literature

## Judges:

Jane Draycott  
Donald Gardner  
Laura Watkinson

Named after the most prominent Dutch poet and playwright of the 17th century, Joost van den Vondel, the biennial award of €5,000 was first awarded in 1996.





Extract from *War and Turpentine*  
by Stefan Hertmans  
Translated by David McKay  
(Harvill Secker)

‘Places are not just space,  
they are also time. I look at  
the city differently now that  
I carry his memories with me.  
My thoughts go on circling  
Kouter... associated with  
Sunday mornings... and the  
old-fashioned band music  
performed in the perfectly  
restored bandstand.’

Copyright © Stefan Hertmans, 2013.  
Translation © David McKay, 2016.

**David McKay** was born in the United States and has lived in The Hague since 1997. He is a translator of both fiction and non-fiction, especially in the field of the visual arts, and academic work. Together with translator Ina Rilke he recently put the finishing touches to an English translation of *Max Havelaar or the coffee auctions of the Dutch trading company* by Multatuli, which will be published in 2018 by NYRB Classics in New York. He is now working on a translation of the novel *De bekeerlinge* by Stefan Hertmans.

**Stefan Hertmans** is the prizewinning author of many literary works, including poetry, novels, essays, plays, short stories and a handbook on the history of art. He has taught at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, at the Sorbonne, the Universities of Vienna, Berlin and Mexico City, at The Library of Congress in Washington, and University College London.

**The Dutch Foundation for Literature** promotes interest in Dutch-language literature abroad. It maintains contacts with a large number of international publishers, and has a stand at major international book fairs in Frankfurt, London, Bologna and Beijing. Foreign publishers wishing to publish translations of Dutch or Friesian literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs. ([letterenfonds.nl/en](http://letterenfonds.nl/en))

**Flanders Literature**, an autonomous governmental institution, encompasses all branches of the literary sector in Flanders (the northern Dutch-speaking part of Belgium). The principal instruments of its foreign policy are information and documentation, translation and production grants, and refund of travel expenses. ([flandersliterature.be](http://flandersliterature.be))

# THE TA FIRST TRANSLATION PRIZE FOR DEBUT TRANSLATION

## Winner:

**Bela Shayeovich** for  
her translation of  
*Second-hand Time*  
by Svetlana Alexievich,  
and edited by  
**Jacques Testard**  
(Fitzcarraldo Editions)

*'Bela Shayeovich's translation is a work of extraordinary, sustained virtuosity, meeting the challenges of this huge polyvocal text energetically and fearlessly like Alexievich herself, she deploys such great skill and sensitivity to ensure that all the voices are properly heard.'*

*The TA First Translation  
Prize Judges*

Sponsors:  
Daniel Hahn  
British Council

Judges:  
Daniel Hahn  
Rosalind Harvey  
Bill Swainson

The TA First Translation Prize, newly established in 2017, is an annual £2,000 prize for a debut literary translation into English published in the UK. The prize is shared between the translator and the book's editor.



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Extract from *Second-hand Time*  
by Svetlana Alexievich  
Translated by Bela Shayevich  
(Fitzcarraldo Editions)

‘My father would say that he personally started believing in communism after Gagarin was sent into space. We’re the first! We can do anything!’

Copyright © Svetlana Alexievich, 2013.  
Translation © Bela Shayevich, 2016.

**Bela Shayevich** is a Soviet-American artist and translator. She studied Comparative Literature at Emory University and received a Masters in Russian translation from Columbia University.

**Jacques Testard** is the founder and editor of Fitzcarraldo Editions. Testard was previously commissioning editor at Notting Hill Editions and co-founded arts and literature journal the *White Review*.

**Svetlana Alexievich** was born in Ukraine in 1948 and has spent most of her life in the Soviet Union and present-day Belarus, with prolonged periods of exile in Western Europe. Starting out as a journalist, she developed her own non-fiction genre, bringing together a chorus of voices describing specific historical moments. Her works include *The Unwomanly Face of War*

(1985), *Zinky Boys* (1990), *Chernobyl Prayer* (1997) and *Second-hand Time* (2013). She was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2015.

**The British Council** is the UK’s international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. They work with over 100 countries in the fields of arts and culture, English language, education and civil society. Last year they reached over 65 million people directly and 731 million people overall including online, broadcasts and publications. They make a positive contribution to the countries they work with – changing lives by creating opportunities, building connections and engendering trust. ([britishcouncil.org](http://britishcouncil.org))

**Daniel Hahn** is a writer, editor and translator. He founded the TA First Translation Prize in 2017 with his share of the winnings from the International Dublin Literary Award.

## Arts Council England

champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature and crafts to collections. Arts Council England invests money from government and The National Lottery in arts and culture across England.

## The Times Literary

**Supplement** is the pre-eminent English-language journal of literature and ideas. It has a long commitment to the art of translation and to the review of foreign books. That commitment is as strong today in the era of these most valuable and welcome awards, as it was in the days when it promoted the work of Pavese and Pasternak, Borges and Musil.

**The British Library**, a Grade I listed building, is the national library of the United Kingdom and the second largest library in the world by number of items catalogued.

The auditorium at the Knowledge Centre, British Library accommodates up to 255 delegates, with facilities for simultaneous translation, film, sound and video presentation, combined with a full team of onsite technical expertise.

**The Society of Authors** promotes and supports ten translation prizes, seven of which are presented tonight. We are the UK trade union for all types of writers, illustrators and literary translators, and have been advising individuals and speaking out for the profession for more than a century. We administer many other prizes, including the Authors' Awards, the Women's Prize, the Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award and the Sunday Times PFD Young Writer of the Year Award. We also offer grants for works in progress ([societyofauthors.org/Grants](http://societyofauthors.org/Grants)).

**The Society of Authors' Translation Prizes 2018**  
(to be presented in 2019)

The Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize (deadline for entry 31.3.18)  
The Bernard Shaw Prize  
The John Florio Prize  
The Schlegel-Tieck Prize  
The Scott Moncrieff Prize  
The TA First Translation Prize (deadline to be confirmed)  
The Premio Valle Inclán

**For further information on the Translation Prizes:**

Visit [societyofauthors.org/Prizes/Translation-Prizes](http://societyofauthors.org/Prizes/Translation-Prizes)  
Email [prizes@societyofauthors.org](mailto:prizes@societyofauthors.org)  
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is the greatest investment any writer  
can make.' *Philip Pullman*

