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Book Review of Modern Arabic Literature: A Bibliography by Ragai N. Makar

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Tucker composes a strongly integrated chapter, based on her own extensive research and that of many others, and shows how developments in one field influence another.

Comparing developments across the region one can better understand general trends and the uniqueness of specific societies, thus raising numerous questions for further research.

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Modern Arabic Literature: A Bibliography. By Ragai N. Makar. Scarecrow Area Bibliographies ; 17. Lanham, Md. : Scarecrow Press, 1998. Pp. xiii, 255. ISBN: 0810835398

The need for a current comprehensive bibliography of modern Arabic literature has been addressed capably with the publication of Makar's *Modern Arabic Literature: A Bibliography*. Particularly since the Nobel Prize for Literature was awarded to Naguib Mahfouz in 1988, interest in works originating in the Middle East has accelerated in the West. Makar, formerly head of the Aziz S. Atiya Library for Middle East Studies at the University of Utah, includes entries he has collected from journals, monographs, chapters, and dissertations. By "modern" he prefers the literature of the twentieth century; the great majority of the citations are dated no earlier than 1960 and are intended for scholars who read English, primarily, or French or Arabic.

Makar has organized the bibliography's 2546 citations under 27 major subject categories listed alphabetically in the table of contents. Within each category, entries are presented in alphabetical order by title or the main author's last name. Co-authors and translators are not cross-referenced in the bibliography itself or in the author index placed at end of the bibliographic entries. Citations are presented in standard bibliographic format. The Library of Congress transliteration scheme is employed throughout for names and Arabic titles, except in cases where names have been otherwise established. Parenthesized English translations of titles are also provided as needed.

For the first, and largest, topical category of Arabic literature—history and criticism, nearly 400 entries are provided. Literary genres generally have separately listed categories for texts (anthologies and individual poems for poetry) and for study and criticism. Also given individual headings are the narrower categories of ballad, comedy, Islamic literature, prisoners' writings, proverbs, and theater studies. Translated texts in English by well

known authors are listed here, supplied with the original titles' transliterations. Presumably, this arrangement simplifies identifying and securing an Arabic original of the work. A unique feature of the bibliography is the provision of special geographic categories, including the literatures of the Mahjar and North African writers. The citations noted under these categories contain a mix of texts and critical pieces. Missing is a description clarifying what exact geographic areas these terms cover. The prominence of Palestinian literature within the overall scope of Arabic literature is reflected in its allocation of categories for both texts and history and criticism. Israeli Arabic literature represented under a separate heading.

One of the areas that Makar makes particular reference to in his introduction is feminist literature. He remarks that the literature of Arab women authors includes a message related to women's socio-political rights and goes on to note the increase in number of women writers and professionals arising from the educational and professional opportunities afforded women in the Middle East. Citations for feminist literature must be gleaned, though, from other category listings since there is not a bibliographic section devoted especially to this acknowledged body of work.

The challenge of preparing a bibliography devoted to a rapidly growing literature lies not only in deciding what to include, but what, as a result of unavoidable culling, will be excluded. A complete compendium of currently published poetry, as an example, would require a volume all of its own, and be incomplete the moment the ink is dry. A research tool taking a longer view might offer a list of publishing sources, such as literary journals, translation institutes, and publishing houses that produce current literary works, so that readers could continue their research beyond the limits of this work. In addition, while many high profile, and prolific, authors in the field have been included in the bibliography, for some of the authors, such as Issa Boullata and Adnan Haydar, the entries included might best be considered as representative samples of their work rather than the total sum of their contributions to Arabic literature.

Although this is not an annotated bibliography, some indication of introductory resources in the various subject categories would have been useful for scholars new to the field. Without doubt, however, Makar has made an important contribution to the study and accessibility of modern Arabic literature with this manageably-sized and nicely-bound bibliography. It deserves a place in all academic and public libraries holding even limited collections of Arabic literature.

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