Talks from the Convention

Heterotopic Materiality, Comics, and Translation

KATHERINE KELP-STEBBINS

In *Rolling Blackouts*, Sarah Glidden's graphic narrative account of traveling as a journalist to document refugees in Turkey, Syria, and Iraq, the author depicts translations by means of overlapping speech balloons (fig. 1). The tail of the speaker's balloon indicates that their own spoken words—sometimes visible as fragments of Farsi or Arabic—are replaced by the words of the translator, whose balloon covers that of the speaker's. Jutting out and away from the speaker, the tail of the translator's balloon symbolically manifests both the translator's visibility and the site of translation. Through diverging, vectorized tails, Glidden marks how a translation takes place. The reader is aware that the words of the translator come to replace the words of the speaker. The reader encounters these words as a gesture toward erasure, one that only indicates itself as such through the visual presence of competing balloons, and the double illusion of depth in planar space and words contained within floating balloons.

What can comics, as particular sites of reading, offer to translation studies? Glidden's example demonstrates how the visual grammar of comics might be drawn on, literally and figuratively, to foreground the labor, theory, and practice of translation. As a peculiar interstice between the world republic of letters and the domain of images, comics necessitate techniques and physical spaces for translation that, through their abrogation of the traditional order of things, might disturb certain assumptions about translation. Although "translation proper" (as Roman Jakobson glosses "interlingual translation" [233]) may appear to be a straightforward concept—even in comics—the differential relations among image, text, form, and format operating across graphic narratives engender ambiguities over how to conceptualize "the proper" for this medium (Reyns-Chikuma and Tarif 3; Rota 84). Glidden's overlapping speech balloons emplace intersemiotic translation in the dialogic space of

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FIG. 1. From *Rollling Blackouts*. Copyright Sarah Glidden. Images courtesy of Drawn & Quarterly.

the page. But what of the emplacement of the page? How does a comics page become a site for intersemiotic translation to take place?

The trilingual Lebanese comics magazine *Samandal* provides an archive for exploring these questions. Engaging the topology of the page itself as the site of translation, *Samandal* asserts translation as a negotiation of place. Sited on the multimodal comics page, the three languages of *Samandal*—Arabic, English, and French—cannot occupy the same space at the same time, and so the pages become literal places for crossing between reading practices conditioned by the comics and cultural traditions of each language. However, the multiple linguistic places in *Samandal* are themselves indicative of translational topologies. For most of its publication history, *Samandal* was designed as a heterotopic site of translation—that is, as a "counter-emplacement" (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" 17)—wherein the materiality of the comics page and the reversible form of the codex enabled mobility between local languages and their left-to-right and right-to-left reading protocols. The founders also pursued a utopian vision of *Samandal* as a digital magazine that could bridge local languages with global readers beyond market and political boundaries. Eventually, in the wake of political sanction, *Samandal* was reformatted as three distinct books, each a translation of the others' linguistic places. A comparative analysis of the translational topologies of *Samandal* reveals comics to be verbal-visual places of translation that are also verbal-visual translations of place.

Siting Comics in Translation Studies

To ground the translational topologies of *Samandal*, it is necessary to consider how space and place

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function in the semiosis of comics. Thierry Groensteen's *The System of Comics* introduces the concept of "spatio-topia," "a term created by gathering, while maintaining distinct, the concept of space (*espace*) and that of place (*lieu*)" (21). In this framework, not all spaces on the comics page will have the same aesthetic or narrative capacity. Each panel serves as its own "site" (34) according to the spatio-topical locative function of the *planche*, or surface of composition, and is subjected simultaneously to a sequential diachronic reading and a synchronic look—as Gérard Genette describes, "a look whose direction is no longer determined by the sequence of images" (34). Spatio-topia diagrams the comics page as a space composed of places at different scales and navigational orders, wherein "[t]he site of a panel determines its place in the reading protocol" within the global design of the *planche* (Groensteen 34). Groensteen maintains, however, that the overall network of verbal-visual elements in a graphic work will create "resonances," endowing the panel with "an effect of transcending the functionality of the site that it occupies, to confer the quality of the *place*" (148). That is, while all comics are composed in space, some sites on the page will become privileged places of reading.

In conversation with translation theory, these spatial concepts invite us to attend to power and form in translation, representation, and reading. If, as Tobias Warner contends, in literary studies, "*translation* names a site of negotiation around the terms of literary culture" (7), then, in comics studies, translation names multiple sites of negotiations between multiple image-text cultures. It is in this graphic abundance that comics "extend traditions of difference that mark words and images as different orders of things" (Drucker, "What Is Graphic" 42). When Tejaswini Niranjana writes that a translator is responsible for having "drawn the margins" of a work (49), it is understood that this drawing is figurative. In comics, however, this drawing is as real as the practical limits of the *planche* and the material limits of the page, which establish a visual syntax for the readable, the seeable, and the reproducible. Recognizing the comics page as a heterogeneous site within which a format, material substrate, reader, editor, or translator may delimit or alter places of reading (and their identification as such) allows us to approach comics as an opportune medium for rethinking translation as a process with material, visual, and literary significance.

As Charles Hatfield has argued, comics reassert the materiality of the page as a site of reading (58–60); therefore they foreground the ways that translation works on and between objects. Hillary Chute likens comics to poetry, arguing that "[c]omics is a *site-specific medium*; it can't be re-flowed, re-jiggered on the page; hence, it is spatially located on the page the way that poetry often must be" (379–80). Chute cites Johanna Drucker's work on concrete poetry as the inspiration for her own understanding of the spatial grammar of comics, specifically Drucker's contention about concrete poetry that "[t]hese are works that cannot be translated—either linguistically or typographically—without losing some essential value performed by the original" ("Visual Performance" 142). To extend Chute's and Drucker's insights beyond this arithmetic of plenitude and loss, might we—as so many (e.g., Venuti x; Emmerich 1) have enjoined us to do—instead recognize translation as a form of interpretation that may or may not be visually and materially occluded or, in turn, foregrounded? As I have written elsewhere, understanding the *planche* as place entails that one also think about the materialities of comics translation as orientation devices, whereby a reader may be alternately disoriented or reoriented through the space (Kelp-Stebbins 211). *Samandal* furnishes a number of material approaches to translation that interpret the *planche* as a site for reorientation, as a place that never was, and as many places at once.

"This 'New' Language of Arab Comics"

Samandal was founded in Beirut in 2007 by Fadi Baki (the fdz), Omar Khouri, Lena Merhej, Hatem Imam, and Tarek Nabaa. These artists named their comics magazine using the Arabic for salamander as a way to signal the interplay between form and place: "Much like the dual habitats of amphibious creatures, Samandal comics thrive between two

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worlds; image and text, entertainment and substance, the low brow and the raised brow, the experimental and the traditional" ("About Us"). *Samandal*'s emergence, indeed, further reified a global heterogeneity in comics terminology, where different historical conceits inform the very classification and definition of image texts. For example, local names for image texts include a substantive, a formal constraint, and multiple metonyms—*comics*, *bande dessinée*, *fumetti*, *manga*—indicating the late consecration of the medium and differing cultural attitudes toward its makeup.[1] When an interviewer asked *Samandal*'s cofounders why they used "Picture Stories from Here and There" as a subtitle, Imam replied, "There's no one word for comics in Arabic!" Baki added, "But we're kind of trying to change that" ("Samandal: Super Friends").

By creating "un espace pour la bande dessinée libanaise" ("a space for Lebanese comics"; Merhej, "Lena Merhej"), *Samandal* created material places to reflect its trilingual point of origin.[2] Thus, the "'new' language of Arab comics" weaves together comics in Arabic, French, and English within the same object (Imam, "Tongue-Tied"). Tellingly, there is no critical consensus regarding this trilingual constitution. Anna Gabai posits that the authors of *Samandal* "live in Lebanon, in other Arab countries, in Europe, and in the States. That's why the magazine is written in three languages" (95). On the other hand, Negar Azimi notes that "*Samandal* is the first trilingual comic ever. Very Lebanese" ("Samandal: Super Friends"). Dominic Davies counters that trilingualism "represents Samandal's efforts to cultivate a cross-national social and cultural geography that extends beyond the Middle Eastern region" (248), while Jonathan Guyer asks whether *Samandal* might be a "lesson for how multilingual Beirut can reconcile three tongues" ("From Beirut"), and Massimo di Ricco argues that the trilingual format reflects "the character of the country and its contributors" (198). If the localizing or globalizing rationales for *Samandal*'s trilingualism seem oppositional, they also situate the magazine within a global history of comics production always already inflected by questions of translation and influence and reflect the specificity of Arabic as a language of comics with its own history and its own limitations.

Comics in Arabic can be traced back through two lineages: *karikatur* in the 1880s (Guyer, "On the Arab Page" 12) and the autonomic development of Arabic-language comics magazines in the 1950s (Douglas and Malti-Douglas 3; di Ricco 188). *Samandal* reflects reading cultures specific to Lebanon, as well as the influence of French, US, and Japanese publishing histories on the development of comics in Arabic. As Imam notes:

> We have always translated, lettered, reprinted and read American, European, and Japanese comics, and in comparison rarely made indigenous Arab comics. The rate and scale of production has been in fits and starts, never really sustained or cogent, mostly targeting children and often propounding dominant political ideologies from pan-Arabism to Islamism. Few attempts struggled with forging a native genre that transcended the barriers of subcultural differences and dialects. ("Tongue-Tied")

Gesturing both outward and inward, Imam shows how certain languages delimit comics production: while English and French saturate the comics marketplace in the Middle East, regional dialects create "barriers" (see also Douglas and Malti-Douglas 224–27). Classical Arabic (*fuṣḥā*) has historically overdetermined what is deemed literary, relegating comics to a sphere of vernacular, which, as Ghenwa Hayek notes, creates a "problem of translatability" that comes with "colloquial Arabic." Hayek credits *Samandal*, "because translations always come out with the text," for facilitating the reading of the text by those who do not "necessarily get the nuances of colloquial Arabic" (Hayek; see also di Ricco 197–98). Yet incorporating translations in *Samandal* was often a scattershot process. Some issues abandoned translations for financial reasons (Imam, "Hatem Imam"), and Baki relates that *Samandal* once polled readers and learned that "nobody used [the translations]," but in the same poll readers opposed the cessation of including translations (Baki).

These differences between the theory and practice of translation index the interplay between

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transnational Arab comics and Lebanon as a site of production. The current editor of *Samandal*, Joseph Kaï, questions the validity of the term *bande dessinée arabe*, noting a lack of common styles, languages, or subjects in Arab comics, while acknowledging the shared "l'absence de structures de distribution. . .dans les pays des cette région" ("absence of distribution structures in the countries of the region"). Kaï asserts, "La BD libanaise d'aujourd'hui cherche de nouvelles formes de narration propres à elle. Une identité" ("Lebanese comics today seek new forms of narration specific to them. An identity"). As a paradigm for Lebanese comics, *Samandal*'s identity is formally manifold but always oriented by its multilingual context.

Heterotopia: The Flippy Page

Weaving three languages together, *Samandal* strove to balance its legibility at linguistic and material levels. Imam outlines the challenge of wanting to create a "beautiful and a functional object" with translations: "It's a nightmare to translate comics because you have to come up with a system that is intuitive" ("Hatem Imam"). Early issues of *Samandal* incorporated translations in English, French, and Arabic for every vignette in the anthology using a variety of formal means. Baki wanted to print translations at the bottom of the page—as in manga—but Khouri took issue with any translation that deformed the composition. The alternative, an appendix with translations at the end, was likewise unfavorable, because "[n]obody was going to read comics looking back and forth" (Baki). Khouri's and Baki's sentiments reveal a tension between the page as its own, un-re-jiggerable site of composition and the print magazine as a distinct object.

Merhej correlates the difficulty of reading between right-to-left and left-to-right languages with the desire to maintain "le sens de lecture" ("the reading orientation") of submissions and the incorporation of translations:

> On a donc opté pour la technique de la *flipping page*, une page qui annonce entre deux récits que l'on doit retourner le livre. L'idée était également de ne pas troubler la composition de la page avec des traductions en bas de pages. . . Il y a donc eu plusieurs options pour les traductions: un marque-page qui se détache, ou alors des traductions en ligne. On a choisi cette première solution pour les premiers numéros puis on a dû arrêter à cause du coût que cela représentait. ("Lena Merhej")

> We therefore opted for the technique of the flipping page, a page that announces between two stories that one must turn the book. The idea was also to not disturb the paginal composition with translations at the bottom of pages. . . There were many options for the translations: a detachable page, or also interlinear translations. We chose the first option for the first issues then we had to stop because of the cost it represented.

The technique of the "flippy page"—as it was called in a 2015 *Samandal* workshop at the British Library—is a material technique that operates spatially to mediate directions of reading and to command the reader to turn the book object. Flippy pages in the first fifteen issues of *Samandal* display a broad range of verbal-visual compositions: some feature characters from stories, while others are entirely sui generis artistic creations; some use words in one language or more to give instructions (e.g., "turn the page," "This Way Up"). Flippy pages complicate *Samandal*'s anthological structure by operating outside each diegetic unit's paginal juxtaposition while joining such units inside the space of the codex.

The flippy page creates a condition of heterotopic materiality. It functions as a *planche* that is read not in a left-to-right or right-to-left *z*-path but rather as its own discrete unit. This unit draws attention to the orders and relations of propinquity, juxtaposition, circulation, and reading practice marked by flipping and the processes that precede and follow it. Indeed, as spaces, these pages indicate "a set of relations that delineate emplacements that cannot be equated or in any way superimposed" (Foucault, "Of Other Spaces" 16). Just as Glidden's "translations" artificially overlay one expression on another to indicate the irreducibility of each visual-verbal utterance to the other, so do the flippy pages designate relations between and among linguistic and readerly practices oriented through the

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preceding and subsequent pages without reproducing or contradicting these practices.

Flippy pages are translation zones conjoining and separating distinct reading spaces and narrative units. As such, these nonplace places disorient and reorient a reader in meaningful ways. A flippy page functions as a command to the reader and as its own space for reading. By bringing together comics practices representative of three distinct verbal-visual idioms, the flippy page is a mode of processing and of juxtaposing the local and global. Flipping the work reveals a protean space that is at once virtual—subject to the emergent constraints of reading—and actual—limned and delimited by the material conditions of print.

A page by Khouri from the sixth issue of *Samandal* visually recalls Foucault's discussion of the mirror as an experience *mitoyenne* between utopic and heterotopic space (fig. 2). This flippy page features Sura and Lulwa, characters from Khouri's ongoing series *Salon Tareq el Khurafi* and *Utopia*. The adult versions, from the dystopian sci-fi *Salon*, peer vertically at the child versions from *Utopia* and ask, "Are They . . . Us?!" in English; the child versions discuss in Arabic the women looking at them, and Sura advises Lulwa to act like she does not see them. Dividing the composition horizontally is a message in Arabic directing readers to follow *Utopia* in its serialized version on www.alraynews.com. The reader of this flippy page reads the characters reading each other across the symmetrical design of the *planche*, the contents of which are asymmetrical and vectorized away from the plane of composition. Rather than the *z*-path of comics, this page engenders an *x*, creating paths that direct the reader off the page. Thus, from a comics-layout perspective, the adults look downward and pose a question that enjoins the reader to flip the page, concluding the left-to-right section of reading that precedes this page. Alternately, child Sura's words and gaze lead off the page in a right-to-left direction, leading the reader to flip to a story—in Arabic—by Jana Traboulsi. As a place that is no-place, the page brings together characters from elsewhere to reorient the reader of the issue. However, the writing that separates and joins these two sets of characters from two different publications directs a reader away from the printed page and to the digital pages of an Arabic-language news site. Because the reader of *Samandal* cannot click the URL, the link remains deictic. Thus the flippy page both reminds the reader of where and what they are not reading while orienting them to reading sites that follow this particular space.

For an informed reader, Khouri's flippy page is especially on the nose in its diegetic and material brokering of utopia (*Utopia*) and dystopia (*Salon*) within the space of *Samandal*. *Utopia* and *Salon* implicate real and imagined places through genre and verbal-visual tension. Sura and Lulwa index the intended grounding of Khouri's work in Beirut, while ungrounding the same work through the instrumentalization of characters as free-floating orientational icons in a backgroundless liminal page.[3] Even as ungrounded icons, Khouri's characters ground readers in the real practices of translational reading and code-switching. As Imam asserts, the flippy page was designed to do exactly this, to mediate the "challenge of using three languages . . . so you don't divide the sections of the Arabic, English, and French, [but rather] you flip the magazine upside down to continue seamlessly through the magazine" ("Hatem Imam"). The flippy page effects seamlessness precisely through its emplacement as a seam that manages the constraints of the printed object. These constraints likewise condition a never-realized attempt to digitally link all of *Samandal*'s pages in one seamless translational matrix.

Digital Utopia: "Publishing Comics Online in Three Languages"

As a heterogeneous field of objects with likewise globally disparate cultural standings, comics maintain an ambivalent relationship to digital utopianism. Some theorists champion the creative possibilities offered through digital platforms (McCloud; Goodbrey); others advance a more circumspect view of how "comics help us understand the debate [between print and digital literature] because materiality is a central and constantly visible

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Fig. 2. Untitled flippy page, by Omar Khouri. *Samandal*, no. 6, 2009. Used with permission of the artist.

aspect of the comics reading experience" (Kashtan 4–6; see also Baudry; Martin; Zanfei).

Since its founding in 2007, *Samandal* has made use of many digital platforms and tools. *Samandal* was an early Lebanese adopter of Creative Commons licensing and notably turned to crowdfunding to cover the cost of fines imposed by the Lebanese government after the magazine was found guilty of "inciting sectarian strife" and "denigrating religion" (Muhanna; Lemon; "The People vs. Samandal Comics"). Ironically, this devastating misreading of *Samandal*—associating the magazine with sectarianism—occurred in 2010, the same year that the group attempted greater unification by submitting the grant application "Grants/Samandal: Publishing Comics Online in Three Languages Under CC Licenses." The application proposes the development of a "dynamic

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website" that could "bridge th[e] localized comic scene" created by *Samandal* and address "an international audience through the translation of its comics into three languages (English, French and Arabic) . . . making them available online under a CC-BY-SA-NC license thus creating a hub were [sic] comic book readers from everywhere can read, share, critique and remix the works" ("Grants/Samandal"). While noting that *Samandal* had already expanded its distribution network to twenty-three points of sale in five countries, with seventy contributors from fourteen countries, the application also characterizes *Samandal*'s network as delimited by "physical availability of the magazine and its restrictions in distribution, as well as the trilingual variety of comics published." To counter these limitations, *Samandal*'s application stipulates that its website will make its comics "not only available online but legible to a wider audience." The proposal conceptualizes digital *Samandal* as utopia, an idealized space for creativity with no real place, an untroubled space in which collaboration and translation might unfold.[4] Note that this nonspace does not increase legibility through additional languages for translation. It merely imagines that making French, English, and Arabic translations of each comic will create consistency for the trilingual translations and a materially facilitated reading experience.

The imagined website prioritizes the consistent inclusion of translations by both translators and designers, who will determine "the best graphical way to apply the translations onto the comics to insure legibility and maintain the integrity of the original comic."[5] As an unrealized place for translation, the site that the application envisions lacks the "directional problems"—overlap or juxtaposition—arising from the commingling of Latin and Arabic scripts. The website will "apply translations" directly to the comics "while maintaining visual flow and capturing the right tone for the translations." Here the place of the page and the specificities of comics composition are reimagined in terms of visual flow. Yet data flow is not without its own financial and place-based limitations, and at the time of this writing, the unfulfilled grant application is more readable than the *Samandal* website, which has been taken over by an online gambling website in Malay.

Multitopia: *Topia*, *Topie*, *Toupya*

A network of real and imagined sites of translation is sketched between the utopianism of *Samandal*'s unrealized website and the magazine's heterotopic approaches to print translation. The grant application notes that "The [website's] translations, unlike the print versions, will be integrated into the comics themselves to allow a non-disruptive reading experience (something that would be practically impossible in the print magazine short of reprinting every issue three times)" ("Grants/Samandal"). Here translation is cast as disruption, and triplicate printing is dismissed as an impractical solution. Yet reprinting every issue three times was precisely the formatting gambit undertaken for *Samandal*'s tenth-anniversary edition. As Imam describes it, "for our tenth anniversary, our editor-in-chief of that issue, Raphaëlle Macaron, who's a crazy woman, like really mad, decided to publish three versions of the magazine, completely translated into each language. So you had three different books" ("Hatem Imam").

Before the publication of the triplicate volume in 2017, *Samandal* made changes to its physical format and its incorporation of translations, shifting the publication model from small-trim digest issues published throughout the year to larger, annual books centered on a specific theme and with a single editor-in-chief. The first of these, *Généalogie*, edited by Barrack Rima (2014) brought together content to challenge linear conceptions of descent and filiation by imagining horizontal rather than vertical associations. The book was thus printed with left-to-right and right-to-left sections that met in the middle. *Géographie*, edited by Joseph Kaï (2015), likewise follows a structure where one flips the album midway to continue through the Arabic section.

Counter to the 2014 and 2015 bivalent volumes, the 2016 volume, *Ça restera entre nous* or خلف الباب (*Khalf al-bāb*), edited by Merhej, reinstated flippy pages while continuing the preceding two volumes'

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practice of including translations following every vignette. In the preface, Merhej stipulates that this structure allows the double characteristic of translating each language separately while they "s'entremêlent en jouant avec le sens d'écriture et de lecture, en amenant le lecteur à tourner et retourner le livre dans tous les sens" ("intertwine, playing with the direction of reading and writing, leading the reader to turn and return the book in every sense"; "Éditorial" 9).

The next volume, the tenth-anniversary edition, *Topia*, again exemplifies the dual centripetal and centrifugal valences of *Samandal*'s composition and circulation. Macaron had originally planned to gather comics from seventeen artists on the theme of utopia (Henoud). Crediting the collective and the magazine with having imagined a place for Lebanese comics that seemed impossible at the time, Macaron envisioned utopia as a conceptual tribute to *Samandal* on its tenth anniversary. Likewise, she theorized the magazine's sociopolitical content as utopic in the sense of its being "le double inversé du monde d'aujourd'hui" ("the inverted double of the contemporary world"; qtd. in Khoury). However, Macaron declares, "Everything I received was dystopia and all submissions were linked to Beirut. So finally, I removed utopia to make it topia, from topos, which is strongly linked to a place; a place rather than a perfect place" (qtd. in Hamouche). Yet, while Macaron calls *Topia* "a place," it is in fact three different yet interdependent and connected places: *Topia*, in English; *Topie*, in French; and *Toupya*, in Arabic.

Each *Topia* volume exists as a unique art object, with a market value, cover, and linguistic content distinct from the others. Imam's Beirut-based design agency, Studio Safar, handled layouts for the volumes, which were printed using risography, a Japanese printing technique, and the Paris-based illustrator Jérôme Dubois designed the three silkscreen covers. The covers each feature a different color scheme and imagery, yet, as Macaron notes, when aligned, they form "une sorte de triptyque conçu comme une histoire qui relate l'évolution de Beyrouth à partir de la recomposition d'un croisement de rue" ("a kind of triptych conceived as a story of the evolution of Beirut from the reconstruction of a street intersection"; qtd. in Khoury). Rather than a single work about no place, the triplicate volume manifests multiple works about a shared place.

Macaron's editorial preface contends that the comics "all articulate around the vast idea of a perfect place, an ideal time and what, ultimately have kept/keeps/will keep us from it." If utopia is out of reach, *Topia*, *Topie*, *Toupya* creates tangible loci for three sites of comics reading. These places are the materiality of translation itself, three separate works that are also one and the same. Yet if *Topia*, *Topie*, and *Toupya* seem more in keeping with Jakobson's translation proper, their incongruity in the place of *Samandal* makes the books unique: instead of incorporating the reading practices from three linguistic orientations into one object, this issue "allow[s] each reader to be fully submerged in the stories . . . making it 'the first Arabic publication of its kind' according to Macaron" (Morley).[6]

The translational topologies of *Samandal* exemplify how comics have historically negotiated technological and ideological constraints—letterpress printing, iconoclasm, and so on—that inform the page as a site for reading transcultural, verbal-visual orders of things. Federico Zanettin contends that "comics as a type of graphic narrative rely on a specific set of conventions and symbols which is the result of a specific history and evolution over time and, to a large extent, cultural exchange through translation" (445). The pages of *Samandal*—heterotopic, utopic, and multitopic—attest to the material basis for this "history," "evolution," and "cultural exchange." Given the consequential role that the letterpress played in the divergent places for text and image, what contributions might the flippy page, an unrealized website, or the risograph have in the orientation to and across spaces of reading? Altogether, these historic sites of *Samandal*'s translation both orient and disorient readers; through the material space of the *planche*, reading is returned to its practical dimension of moving in space. To read, and thus to translate, *Samandal* is to carry meaning across tangles of language, across chimeras of

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communication, across the many possible places delimited by the comics page.

Notes

1. Culturally distinct names for image texts may be anachronistic, as in *comics*, which indexes the humorous nature of the late-nineteenth-century "Comic Supplement" in the *New York World* and *New York Journal* (Groensteen, "Definitions" 93) but which now refers to a number of genres that are a far cry from funny. *Bande dessinée* didn't gain consensus in francophone parlance until the 1940s, after there were already many examples of works that were not entirely "stripological," as Pierre Fresnault-Deruelle would have it. Paradoxically, the Italian term *fumetti* ("little puffs of smoke," a descriptor for speech balloons) once "designated comics with captions, without speech balloons" (Groensteen, "Definitions" 95). In that *manga* denotes pictures but does not necessarily describe words, it metonymizes an image text in terms of its visual quality (Hirohito and Prough 40).

2. All translations are mine unless otherwise indicated.

3. As Khouri notes of *Salon*: "I wanted to be very clear that it was set in Beirut. And it was in Arabic, so I did a lot of drawings in that series that are very realistic. . . . It's trying to bring that sci-fi into our lives because we grew up on sci-fi of everywhere else" ("Interview").

4. This paraphrase of Foucault's description of utopias in *The Order of Things* draws from the French contrast between place (*lieu*) and space (*espace*) (*Mots* 9), rather than the translation: "although they have no real locality (*lieu*) there is nevertheless a fantastic, untroubled region (*espace*) in which they are able to unfold" (xviii).

5. The application also highlights the material conditions of online publishing: its modest budget comprises a one-time cost of $3,250 for website development and a per-issue cost of $1,200 for translation and design ("Grant/Samandal").

6. *Samandal 3000*, published in 2019, likewise has three distinct versions with unique covers and color schemes for its French, English, and Arabic volumes.

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