



## Now in Arabic...

Hundreds of science books, including classics by Isaac Newton and Stephen Hawking, will be translated into Arabic for the first time. The ambitious plan by a non-profit group in Abu Dhabi has the backing of the Crown prince and funding from the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage.

The project, called Kalima (“word” in Arabic), is an attempt to address the fact that, although there are more than a quarter of a billion Arabic speakers worldwide, only a few hundred books are translated into Arabic each year. The group is working with more than 20 publishers throughout the Arab world. It plans to help them acquire, translate, publish and distribute about 100 books in Arabic every year. Around a quarter of these will be science titles.

“There is a particularly large gap in the Arab library of books in the natural-science category,” says Karim Nagy, the Egyptian entrepreneur and book collector who directs the project. “We have therefore purposely placed a heavier weighting on it.”

One book already translated is *A Briefer History of Time*, Stephen Hawking’s revision of his best-seller (see above). Next year, Kalima will translate books by Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg, Max Planck and Richard Feynman into Arabic, and prepare Arabic versions of recent works by Roger Penrose, Steven Weinberg and Freeman Dyson. Other scientists to be translated include Stephen Jay Gould, Stephen Wolfram and James Watson. Eventually, Nagy hopes also to begin translating Arabic books into English and other languages. ■

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